Groundwork Of Ancient Indian History

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The sacred Memory

of

SRI NAGENDRA NATH GHOSH

Contents

Part IV

Disintegration and Foreign Invasion
(B.C. 184—319 A.D.)

Appendices

PREFACE

The object of this volume is to describe, in a general way, the political and cultural developments of ancient India from the earliest times to the rise of the Gupta dynasty. It is proposed to sketch the history of the period from the Guptas to Harshavardhana in a second volume.

Though the outlines of ancient Indian history are more clearly defined now than they were in the days of Vincent Smith and other earlier writers on the subject, much still remains to be done and many vital points are still involved in controversy. The account in the following pages is naturally based on the views which appear more reasonable than the others to me, but care has been taken to indicate the current opinions and theories in foot-notes, so far the limitations of space have permitted it.

I take this opportunity to thank all those who have kindly helped me by their suggestions. I am specially grateful to Sri S. K. Srivastava and Dr. Lallanji Gopal for having contributed one valuable appendix each to this book. The former has written the appendix on 'The sources' while the pages on 'Results of ihe Greek contact' I owe to the latter.

My thanks are also due to Sarvasri R. C. Tripathi, D. N. Tripathi, Janak Raj Kalia and M. C. Chandola for having seen the work through the press.

The omission of diacritical marks is regretted and so is the inefficient proof-reading which is responsible for many inconvenient mistakes.

Allahabad, 1958 **J. S. Negi.**

List of abbreviations

A.H.I. or AHI	—An Advanced History of India
AIU	—The Age of Imperial Unity (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan)
AV	—Atharva veda
PE	—Pillar Edict of Asoka
RE	—Rock Edict of Asoka
MRE	—Minor Rock Edict of Asoka
CHI	—Cambridge History of India
EHI	—Early History of India (Vincent Smith)
PHAI	—Political History of Ancient India (Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri)
PTS	—Pali Text Society
PIHC	—Proceedings of the Indian History Congress
NHIP	—A New History of the Indian People (Vol. VI)
RV	—Rig veda
JRAS	—Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
JNSI	—Journal of the Numismatic Society of India
CII	—Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum
IHQ	—Indian Historical Quarterly
IA	—Indian Antiquary
JASB	—Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
ABORI	—Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
JAOS	—Journal of the American Oriental Society
IC	—Indian Culture

Part I

The Foundations: From the earliest times to c. 600 B.C.

CHAPTER I

The Stone Ages of India

The physical environment of Man, when he first opened the eye on the earth nearly half a million years ago, would hardly be described as ideal for his welfare and future growth. From the beginning the frail 'human creature' found himself in the midst of a bitter struggle for existence. With his utterly inadequate equipment of hands, feet and teeth, he had to wage a constant war on the far more savage, powerful and unfriendly animal world, and a great strain was imposed upon him by the attempt to adapt himself to the catastrophic changes of climate during the remote period of his cultural infancy much of which was covered by the geological epoch styled Pleistocene.[1] In one respect, however, Nature had been kind to him. While his physical frailty was great as compared to the bodily strength of animals, he possessed the advantage of a powerful brain, a capacity to plan and improvise. It was this that enabled him to withstand the rigour of climate and the hostility of the contemporary animals. Unlike that of animals, his struggle for survival did not follow the line of personal transformation but of extra-corporeal improvement. He met the onslaught of glaciation, not by growing hair on his body, but by learning to take shelter in caves, by bringing fire into his service and by putting on a coat of hide and fur. To fight the animals and to supplement his meagre supply of natural food, he began to make tools and weapons. Thus were laid the foundations of his supremacy in the animate world and the beginnings of civilisation were made. Progress was extremely slow in the beginning. For a long time man was entirely dependent on the bounties of Nature and led a parasitic life, deriving his sustenance from roots and fruits, hunting and fishing. His tools and weapons were made exclusively of stone. Even after he began to 'grow' his food in addition to gathering it, stone provided the only material for his extra-corporeal equipment and it was not before c. 4000

B. C. that he learnt the use of metal. The period of his development before he stumbled on the secret of metals is known as 'Stone Age' and is further sub-divided into Palaeolithic (Old Stone), Mesolithic (Middle Stone) and Neolithic (New Stone) epochs indicating the gradual development of the technique of manufacturing tools and the economic and cultural growth linked up with it. The earliest phases of human history in India conform to this general pattern and in the following lines an attempt is made to summarise, on its basis, the meagre information we possess about the Stone Age man in this country.

When the first faint ray of light begins to glimmer through the darkness, we find traces of man in the north-western part of India in the form of some large stone flakes 'embedded in fan-shaped boulder-gravels in the Sivalik Hills, N. W. Punjab, Punch and Jammu.'[2] The 'men' of the 'Indian Dawn' who used these probably belonged to a very early stratum of the Old Stone Age and may have lived about 4,00,000 years ago. Palaeolithic artefacts of the subsequent period have a wide distribution and are found practically all over the country.[3] The labour of scholars and explorers like Bruce Foote, Burkitt, Commiade, De Terra, Paterson and others have placed the study of these on a scientific footing and it is gratifying to note that the subject is now receiving much greater attention from Indian investigators than was formerly the case.

Like their counterparts elsewhere, the Indian palaeoliths are rough implements and tools made chiefly of quartzite and flint. They display a wide variety of types well suited for piercing, cutting, chopping, tearing and digging—basic processes of primitive life. Typology and geographical distribution enable us to broadly classify them under two groups, though tools of one group are sporadically found in the region of the other. One of these comprises finds, manufactured principally out of quartzite pebbles, from the Punjab, Kashmir and other places in the north. This pebble industry of the north is designated as 'Soan' by archaeologists as it has been best studied from the remains discovered in the beds or terraces of the river Soan, a tributary of the Indus. The industry is unique at present, no exact parallels have been discovered elsewhere. But it is pointed out that its products bear a generic similarity to those of the Choukoutien Culture of China, Patjamian of Java and Anyathian of

Burma[4] and they might be the work of primitive 'anthropoid' men such as *Pithecanthropus* and *Sinanthropus*.

The other major class consists of South Indian finds in which the predominant element seems to be what is described as the 'Abbevillio-Acheulian Handaxe' by archaeologists. Tools identical in form with this group have been discovered in Southern, Western and Northern Africa, the Mediterranean Coast, Western Europe, England and Sweden. As in the case of the Soan, so in that of this southern industry also, the 'human' equation is not definitely known; no human fossils associated with the artefacts have been found. But, as in the case of the western analogues, the possibility of a true *homo-sapien* origin for it cannot be ruled out.

The identity or resemblance of the Indian palaeoliths with those of Africa, Europe and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia is difficult to explain at present. One hypothesis, not less plausible than others, interprets the similarity as indicating affinity of 'culture'. If this is accepted, it may be said that in the Palaeolithic period India was the meeting ground of two prominent 'cultural' streams of the world which mingled and over-lapped in the regions of Central India, Gujrat and Bundelkhand. But these conclusions must be regarded as only tentative and much further research in the field is needed before any definite opinion can be pronounced.[5]

The Palaeolithic man in India, both in the Handaxe and Soan zones, was in a very low stage of cultural and economic evolution. He had not yet risen above the 'universal level' of life that is seen to underlie differentiated growth everywhere. His technique of manufacturing tools, though showing signs of gradual improvement, was still very crude and clumsy. True to the pattern of the Early Stone Age all over the world, he was a 'savage', *i.e.*, one who did not produce his food but lived solely on roots, fruits and the outcome of chase and fishing. He probably knew the use of fire though definite evidence on the point is lacking. The distribution of Palaeolithic sites suggests that he preferred to live on the banks of rivers. His only shelter from cold and rain were natural caverns and he is not known to have built artificial houses of any kind.

After a long period of almost imperceptible growth a change began to appear in the material equipment of man who now entered the phase described as Mesolithic, *i.e.*, the period of transition between the purely Palaeolithic and Neolithic stages of culture. Economic and social setting apart, the distinguishing archaeological badge of the Mesolithic Age are the tools known as 'microliths' or 'pygmy tools'. These tools are very small in size, measuring from half an inch to three-fourths of an inch, and are often geometrical in shape. They could be very effectively used as arrow-points and might also have been hafted to horns and utilised as sickles. The Mesolithic man had a keen eye for semi-precious stones and, instead of quartzite, fashioned his tools out of jasper, agate, schist etc. Microlithic communities were settled in many parts of India.[5]

Like their predecessors of the Palaeolithic epoch, the Mesolithic Indians were also primarily hunters. They hunted such animals as cows, buffaloes, wild horses, oxen, sheep and goats, but fish, fruits and vegetables also formed an important part of their diet. Agriculture was not known, but as a prelude to it, some Mesolithic communities of Gujrat might have harvested certain species of grass as a food material as was done by some Mesolithic peoples of Palestine. At a later stage of evolution, the Mesolithic men probably started producing pottery.

As Langhnaj in Gujrat, some human skeletons of this period have been found. They are said to belong to a Hamitite Negroid stock. The skeletons were buried ceremonially in a crouchant position showing clearly that the Mesolithic Indians had developed certain ideas concerning the dead and possibly life hereafter.

In India, as elsewhere, the Mesolithic gradually merged into the Neolithic, indicating a further advance in the scale of progress. Neolithic implements have been discovered in large nambers all over the country but Bellary in Mysore, Hyderabad, Madhya Bharat and Bundelkhand appear to be specially rich in them. They are entirely different from their Palaeolithic and Mesolithic precursors both in typology and choice of material. They were manufactured mainly out of dark traprock, though other stones such as basalt, schist and sand-stone were also used. Much better finished than the earlier tools, they are distinguished by unmistakable traces of polish all over the body or at edges only.

An analysis of these tools reveals two possible cultural streams in the Neolithic Age—a southern and an eastern one. The typical tool of the southern group is a polished stone celt with a flat, circular or semi-circular section. The eastern group is distinguished by the occurrence of long, thin, chisel-like polished stone celts and also shouldered celts which were probably the prototypes of the pre-historic copper tools of similar design. The ethnic and cultural implication of this typological difference is not known.

As no major Neolithic site has been properly excavated and studied so far it is difficult to form a clear picture of life in Neolithic India. It is, however, evident that the cultural endowments of the New Stone Age were distinctly superior to those of the preceding epochs. Man had by now advanced considerably beyond Paleolithic savagery and had graduated to the stage of economic progress known as 'barbarism'. From a mere 'gatherer' of food, he had become a 'producer' of food, and agriculture played an important part in his economy. He made houses, domesticated animals and manufactured pottery. From the discoveries at Brahmagiri and Sangan-Kallu (Bellery) it appears that he led a more or less settled life, living at the same place for a pretty long period of time. For the disposal of the dead be constructed tombs and, according to some authorities, he was acquainted with the elements of the art of painting but this is regarded as highly doubtful by others.[6] Thus the Neolithic scene in India, though yet only vaguely perceived, was essentially similar to that of Western Asia and Africa.

The Stone Age in India may be said to have come to an end in the fourth millennium B. C. when the discovery of copper formally introduced the era of metals. But the change-over was neither drastic nor simultaneous all over the country ; its effects were very unevenly manifested in time and space. The knowledge of metals, in conjunction with other factors, soon brought about a great alteration in the life and economy of the north-west, but the use of stone tools and implements continued side by side with that of copper and bronze in the Indus Valley cities. Metals seem to have come into vogue in the Gangetic Valley and the central and western parts of India also at an early date but the material condi-

tions here were probably not affected to the same revolutionary extent as in the north-west. In some regions, the exclusive use of stone lasted for a much longer period and it was in the early historical times that metals began to be known.[7]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The Pleistocene was the predecessor of the 'Holocene' or the present epoch. The 'human species' may actually have emerged before the beginning of the Pleistoene, but it seems to have developed mostly through it. The Pleistocene was a period of violent climatic changes. In high latitudes, periods of extreme cold (glaciation) were followed by comparatively warm intervals (interglaciation). There were in all four Glacial Periods separated by three Inter-Glacials. In the tropics there was a corresponding succession of Pluvials (incessant, violent rains) and Inter-Pluvials (comparatively dry).

2. The Vedic Age, p. 123.

3. Paleolithic finds have been recorded from practically the whole of India ; only the Gangetic plain seems to be deficient in them.

4. Zeuner, Dating the Past, (1952), pp. 277 ff. Hall, A History of South East Asia, p. 5.

5. At first Mesolithic sites were recorded only from Central and Southern India. But now traces of Microlithic cultures have been found in Kutch and the Punjab also. Recently, Mr. G. R. Sharma of the Allahabad University has collected a large number of microliths in the Banda district of U. P.

6. Crude, primitive-looking paintings have been discovered in rock-shelters at some places in the Central Indian plateau. But their date is uncertain and their pre-historic association is not proved by any incontrovertible evidence. See Archaeology in India, pp. 44-50.

7. This is illustrated by the recent excavations at Brahmagiri and Maski.

CHAPTER II

The Pre-Aryan Settlers[1]

The literary record of Indian history commences only in the second millennium B. C. with the arrival of the Aryan-speaking Indo-Europeans. Until not long ago, the coming of these tall, fair-skinned peoples was for all practical purposes the beginning of that history. While their religious texts, the Vedas, provided a good source of knowledge about their overall life, the period before their advent was an obscure epoch about whose culture and people we knew next to nothing and which was not unoften pictured as an era of savage or barbaric conditions. The meagre and unimpressive relics of the Stone Age, referred to in the previous chapter, only served to accentuate this impression. Recent years have witnessed some increase in our knowledge of this early period. The excavations in the Indus Valley have revealed the material remains of a splendid city culture which flourished in the third millennium B. C., if not earlier still, and the antiquity of *civilisation* in India has thus been pushed back by a long stretch. Moreover, the evidence of anthropological, archaeological and linguistic data has been examined more carefully than before and attempts have been made to reconstruct the pre-Aryan Indian picture on the basis of inferences drawn from it. The progress made so far in the delineation of the pre-Aryan past is far from adequate, but it may not be termed as discouraging.

The Aryans, belonging to the Nordic family of the human race, entered the country at a comparatively late date. Prehistoric shiftings before their time had brought in immigrant groups of other racial stocks in waves which were probably separated from each other by considerable intervals. Neither the Nordics nor any of these earlier arrivals exist in a pure form now. Extensive commingling and admixture and the strong influence of common geographical and economic conditions have to a large extent obliterated their original genetic differences and tended to produce a common Indian type. To ascertain the different racial strains that have thus fused to form the population of India, it is

necessary to analyse its physical features. According to a recent authoritative view, such an analysis discloses as many as 'six main races with nine sub-types' in the Indian people. These are: Negritos, Proto-Australoids, Mongoloids, Mediterraneans (Dravidians), Western Brachycephals and Nordics (Aryans).[2]

The Negritos, coming from Africa, probably entered India during the Paleolithic period. It would appear that most of them were finished off or assimilated by those who came after them. A small Negrito community is to be found in the Andaman Islands where it has kept up its ancient language and traces of Negrito blood have been discovered elsewhere also[3]. But, for all practical purposes, the Negrito element may be regarded as non-existent in the Indian population. The Proto-Australoids, also immigrants from the west[4], are a much more important factor in the racial and cultural *milieu* of India. Their strain is most prominent in the Kol or Munda tribes and 'throughout the greater part of India they still live as the lower castes or sections of the Indian people'[5]. The Mediterraneans, who spoke the Dravidian language and are therefore commonly known as Dravidians, may have arrived either in the Neolithic period or soon after the commencement of the Metal Age[6]. Their languages to-day form a 'solid bloc in the south but there are weighty reasons to believe that they were once fairly wide-spread over North India also. The Brahui speech of the Baluchi hills represents a solitary Dravidian pocket in the north. Traces of the Brachycephalic type, supposed to have originated in Central Asia, are found in Karnataka, Orissa and Bengal while the Mongoloid element is dominant in the tribes of Assam and the Indo-Burmese frontier. People of these two stocks also settled in India before the Aryans, though their infiltration continued in the later period[7].

One of the most interesting problems of Indian history—and one about which there is much difference of opinion—relates to the cultural achievements of these pre-Aryan settlers. Though the view that the Aryans brought the first showers of culture into the barbaric waste of India is now definitely rejected and it is common knowledge that the country had developed a civilisation of her own prior to the impact of the Nordic immigrations, there is no direct evidence which may enable us to evaluate the

contributions of the various peoples mentioned above to the building of that civilisation. In the absence of such direct evidence, scholars have taken recourse to what may be described as linguistic paleontology i.e., the study of the oldest words and expressions in their current languages, and made certain deductions from it. It is thought that while the Negritos did not advance beyond the primitive stage of culture and economy, the Proto-Australoids were familiar with agriculture and grew, among other things, rice, many kinds of vegetables and sugar-cane. They knew the art of producing pottery and weaving cotton cloth and lived in villages with a good social life. They were also probably the first to tame the elephant and the buffalo. The Dravidians carried the organisation of life to a still higher plane. They introduced a city culture as against the village culture of their predecessors, used most of the metals that are known to-day, and perhaps made use of writing also. They built boats and ships which were utilised for foreign trade. Their political and military organisation was fairly well developed, with kings or chiefs ruling over states regulated by established laws and customs and defended by warriors fighting with bows, arrows, spears and lances. They were familiar with the rudiments of astronomy.

Many of the material bases of Indian culture thus go back to the pre-Aryan past. An examination of its spiritual aspects also leads to a similar conclusion. It is, for example, inferred that the germ of the idea of transmigration, which has played such a vital role in the development of Indian religions and philosophy, may have existed among the Proto-Australoids who also bequeathed to the later times such elements of religion as the worship of Nagas and other zoomorphic deities, the use of vermilion and turmeric in ceremonies, the custom of *nichhawar* or *baran* and many legends and religious stories. 'Many of the Hindu religious ideas and practices, particularly the system of worshipping images of gods with flowers, fruits, leaves, and water are probably derived from the Dravidians and some well-known Hindu divinities may be of Dravidian origin.[8] Dravidian elements have been detected in such principal deities of the Hindu pantheon as Siva, Uma, Skanda, Hanuman, and Ganesa.

The above conclusions, based chiefly on linguistic data, about the individual contributions of the various races, are regarded with suspicion by some noted writers. But there is no doubt that the collective achievement of the pre-Aryan Indians is by no means exaggerated by them. In the Indus basin archaeology has clinched the matter by unearthing the remains of a high urban civilisation which represents the sum-total of the cultural progress of the pre-Aryans and which does not fall short of the picture drawn by the linguists. This remarkable phase of Indian history deserves special treatment and a short account of it will be found in the next chapter under the caption 'The Copper-Bronze Age Civilisation of India.' The evidence of archaeology is not so eloquent about the other parts. Inner India has so far yielded no early relics indicative of as high a material advancement as that of the Indus valley, but here also it was obviously not all savagery and primitivism. Numerous 'copper hoards' and bronze implements, generally supposed to date from the pre-Aryan epoch, have been brought to light from the northern, central and western regions. These do not reveal the exact degree of development attained by the culture which produced them, but they at least show that their users had already advanced beyond the primitive economy of the Stone Age. Some of them, such as the swords from Fatehgarh in U. P. and Hyderabad, even reflect a decided sophistication. The pre-Aryans of the Gangetic valley may not have possessed prosperous cities of the Indus type, but that they had vital social and cultural traditions of their own which the Aryan advance could not fully eradicate and which to a large extent modified the influence of that advance in absorbing it, is strongly suggested by what we know about the Aryans after they had settled in the valley. The later Vedic works, composed mostly there, reflect a great change in the social and religious set-up of the Indo-Europeans since the days of the Rigveda which relates to the north-west Much of that change is fundamental, obviously not an internal growth of the original tradition itself, and is clearly due to the operative influence of a living and forceful native culture. It is difficult to explain the rise of Jainism and Buddhism except

against the background of comparatively civilised non-Aryan communities in the region where they were born.

The Mongoloid peoples touched only the fringe of India and are not supposed to have exerted any deep influence over her cultural development. But the contribution of the Proto-Australoids and the Dravidians has not been insignificant and there is a decided tendency now to regard them, along with the Aryans, as the co-authors of the early Indian civilisation. They had developed many notable features of that civilisation, both material and spiritual, and had fixed its pattern to a large extent before the arrival of the Indo-Europeans. The Hindu culture which has endured through the ages is a mixed one. Its origins are both Aryan and non-Aryan.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This subject has been discussed with his usual erudition and insight by Dr. S. K. Chatterji in The Vedic Age, Chapter VIII. The present writer has followed him in most of the conclusions set forth here.

2. B. S. Guha, Racial Elements in the Indian Population, Oxford Pamphlets on Indian Affairs. (No. 22).

3. e.g. in the Travancore-Cochin and Rajmahal Hills.

4. They are supposed by some to have come from the Palestine area.

5. The Vedic Age, p. 143.

6. Some scholars postulate an Indian origin for the Dravidians, but this is not generally accepted.

7. The Vedic Age, pp. 143-144.

7a. The Negritos and the Brachycephals have not retained their original language in India. The people of India, formed by the admixture of the original races, are now included in four language-families, viz., Austric, Tibeto-Chinese, Dravidian and Aryan.

8. R. C. Majumdar : Ancient India (1952), p. 16.

CHAPTER III

The Copper-Bronze Age of India

Nearly 6000 years ago a new stage was reached in the development of human history with the advent of metals. The earliest metal known was copper, but its exclusive use lasted only for a short period and soon bronze, an alloy of copper and tin, was in extensive vogue in the smithies of the world. For a long time, upto c. 1200 B. C. when iron was discovered, man depended chiefly on these two, copper and bronze, for his metallic equipment and accordingly this phase of his growth may be described as Copper-Bronze Age or simply as Bronze Age. It witnessed humanity taking a gigantic step forward. Combined with the invention of the potter's wheel, the sailing ship and the ox-cart, the knowledge of metals revolutionised the simple neolithic communities. While in the 'restricting environment' of mountains and arid regions the old order registered comparatively slight advance, the fertile valleys of the Nile in Egypt, Tigris and Euphrates in Western Asia and Indus in India, gradually became the cradles of complex societies whose life and activities centred round thriving cities and which possessed a *civilisation* in the full sense of the term. Commencing about the fourth millennium B. C., the Copper-Bronze Age of India lasted upto c. 1000 B. C. when the Aryan settlers of the country seem to have gained the knowledge of iron either independently or from Western Asia. Of late, its tangible remains have been claiming an increasing share in the attention of archaeologists. As has been said above, many 'copper hoards' and bronze implements, evidently relating to the pre-iron era and including celts, axes, swords, rings, harpoons etc., have been dis-

covered in the Gangetic valley, Madhya Bharat and Madhya Pradesh.[2] From South India only a few stray finds of this type have been recorded so far.[3] The actual social and economic context of these antiquities is obscure, very little of a definite nature being known about the culture of their authors and users from them. The surviving relics of the Bronze Age in North-Western India—in the Indus valley and the adjoining borderland—are more illuminating. Here we have not only tools and implements, but also numerous other indications bearing on society and culture, and it is possible to reconstruct a tolerably coherent, though far from complete, picture of the general mode of life. The remains are of large and prosperous cities with extensive internal and external trade connections as also of small villages and hamlets supplying their agricultural background. It is thus fortunate that we are in a position to form some idea of both rural and urban life in this part of Bronze Age India.

A. THE VILLAGE COMMUNITIES

Archaeological evidence reveals the existence of a large number of village societies which flourished and decayed in the hills and coastal regions of Baluchistan and the adjoining plain of lower Sind during the Copper-Bronze Age and practised a mode of life generally similar to that of the contemporary and near-contemporary peasant groups of the Middle East. These early villagers of India dwelt in small settlements, hardly ever exceeding two acres in extent and consisting of mud-brick houses with occasional use of stone for the plinths and lower courses. There was naturally a visible diversity of cultural forms in the villages due to the considerable isolation imposed by the barriers of mountain and valley. On the basis of this diversity, specially the distinction of pottery types, the known villages have been assigned to four different cultures, viz., the Kulli culture, the Amri-Nal culture, the Quetta culture and the Zhob culture. But it must be remembered that over-riding the differences there was a basic uniformity induced by the similarity of geographical

circumstances. Everywhere within the small settlements, which had generally no surrounding or defensive walls, life was of a simple, almost self-sufficient type with only a few signs of urban sophistication.

The village folk, living mainly by agriculture, had acquired considerable skill in the manufacture of pottery. They understood the use of the wheel and produced cups, beakers, pitchers, dishes, storage vessels and other articles of domestic use which they frequently decorated with pleasant patterns in various colours: fish, birds, animals, leaves, plants, geometric designs and even landscape. A large number of clay figurines, mostly representing cattle or women, were also fabricated. Birds are not unrepresented and an interesting specimen from Periano Ghundai seems to be a horse.

The village population included a dextrous class of stone-cutters. As an example of the stone-cutter's art, special mention may be made of some small pots or boxes of soft stone engraved with linear patterns produced by the Kulli people. These artistically made boxes are sometimes found in early Mesopotamian sites and furnish indubitable proof of actual intercourse existing between that distant country and the small peasant community of Baluchistan.

The smiths of the villages manufactured copper and bronze axes, chisels, saws, bows, knives and various types of ornaments. A most interesting specimen of the smith's work is a round copper mirror,[7] 5 inches in diameter, 'with its handle representing a stylised female with prominent breasts and arms akimbo, but with the head provided evidently by the reflection of the user in the mirror,'[8] The mirror is an uncommon mark of urban luxury in the otherwise simple life of the village folk who had, however, a great predilection for finery and ornaments made of shell, pottery or copper. Beads of various shapes and sizes were also used for personal decoration. The material of the beads was agate, carnelian, faience and even lapis-lazuli.

No definite information is forthcoming about the religion of these villagers but a 'cult centring round fertility rites and the worship of a Mother Goddess' seems a likely postulate[9]. One of the more prominent sites has yielded a stone phallus and a doubtful example of the phallic symbol is said to occur at another place also. The burial customs of the people varied from place to place. While some of them probably cremated their dead others showed a preference for fractional or complete inhumation. The graves were not infrequently stocked with goods considered necessary for the departed dead, including pottery, stone or copper implements, bracelets, bangles, necklaces and animal bones.

In spite of their almost complete self-sufficiency, the Baluchi villages maintained steady contact with the outside world. They were in constant intercourse with the great cities of the Indus valley and seem to have carried on an active barter with their merchants and carvan-traders. As already noted, some of their products found a market even in distant Mesopotamia. Professor Piggot points out that the trade with Mesopotamia must have been sea-borne.[10]

The oldest of the villages was probably in existence as early as c. 3500 B. C.[11]. But there is no doubt that many of them flourished contemporaneously with the cities of the Indus valley and some may have survived the fall of the latter. On the whole they may be taken as representing a peasant and rural world thriving on the fringe of a great urban civilisation and acting as a sort of set-off to it. Historically the end of this world is linked up with that of the Indus Civilization and it seems that it was disrupted by the shock of the same external invasions which brought about the final collapse of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro.

B. THE INDUS VALLEY CIVILISATION

The natural limitations of the Baluchi Hills prevented the peasant societies described above from advancing beyond the stage

of village economy. But the broad alluvial plain of the Indus, with its superbly rich soil and a great water thoroughfare giving easy access to its different parts, provided an infinitely better environment for further economic advancement necessitating a radical change in the social and cultural set-up also. Here, by a process quite analogous to the one which brought about the urban revolution in the Nile and the Tigris-Euphrates valleys, the simple Bronze Age villages were converted into swarming cities and a great city civilisation sprang into existence,[12] an eastern ramification of the cultural phase known as River Valley Civilisation. Only a few years back this splendid achievement of the Indian peoples in the pre historic period was quite unknown and the erroneous belief held the field that the beginning of civilisation in India was not older than the advent of the Aryans. Sir Alexander Cunningham had acquired some of its antiquities long ago, but it was only in the year 1922 A. D. that it was placed in the proper historical perspective and its full significance was realised after the discoveries of Mr R. D. Banerji. Subsequent excavations and explorations have laid bare its impressive fabric and India now figures with Mesopotamia and Egypt as a pioneer of human civilisation.

The pre-historic city culture of the Indus valley is generally described by modern archaeologists as the Harappa Culture after the name of one of its principal sites. The Harappa ruins representing the ancient chalcolithic[13] city lie in the Montgomery District of the Punjab, some 100 miles to the south-west of Lahore. The other main centre of the civilisation was at Mohenjo Daro (Hill of the Dead) on the right bank of the Indus in the Larkana District of Sind. The compass of the civilisation itself was an enormous one, its 'visible edge' at present extending from Rupar near Ambala in the north to Rangpur in Kathiawar in the south and from the dried-up bed of the river Ghaggar in Bikaner in the east to Sutkagen-dor in Makran in the west. Within this vast area about 60 sites[10] have yielded remains of the Harappa Culture giving us an idea of its nature and achievements. The explorations carried out

so far show that the main burden of the settlements lay in the lower Indus region which is at present a cheerless arid tract, difficult to imagine as the seat of a thriving civilisation without extensive and well-planned artificial irrigation. It wore a different aspect in the period when the cities flourished there. The very fact that the builders of the Indus towns used kiln-burnt bricks in place of the usual sun-dried mud-bricks prevalent in pre-historic Asia implies a sufficiently moister climate than at present. The abundant representation of the tiger, buffalo, rhinoceros and elephant on the Indus seals also indicates the presence of jungles and swamps in the neighbourhood of the settlements. Among the extant remains of the cities there is very little evidence of familiarity with the camel—a fact which may be taken to suggest that the region had not yet acquired the present semi-desert character.[15]

The antecedents of the Harappa culture are unknown at present. At Harappa itself the culture was preceded by a people using the characteristic red-ware pottery of the N. Baluchistan villages and at least three sites in Sind had been occupied by the 'Amri Culture' people before they were taken over by the Harappans. But no organic connection can be established between the preceding and succeeding cultures of these sites at present. The Harappa Culture is already in its mature phase of evolution when it first bursts into view and no preparatory or initial stages are known.

The twin foci of the civilization, the great towns of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro, were similar in appearance. The architectural scheme of the cities, which were about 3 miles in perimeter, resolves itself into two distinct elements—the lower town or the main city and a lofty fortified citadel looking down upon it at the western end. The citadel was a high (over 30 ft.) mud-and-mud-brick platform, in the shape of a parallelogram measuring roughly 400 × 200 yards and supporting a group of impressive buildings. At Harappa it was defended by a wall of mud-brick, 'battered internally and externally and faced with a rivetment of

burnt bricks on the outside, the whole structure being fifty feet wide at the base and rising to a height of some 35 feet.[9] The defensive wall, strengthened with regular salients and towers, was pierced by gates in the north and west and must have, when intact, imparted an aspect of lofty aloofness and stern authority to the citadel. The fortified area at Mohenjo Daro presented similar features.

It is clear that the citadel was the seat of whatever controlling power there was to regulate the civic and economic life of the two cities and also possibly of the other towns and settlements of the Indus Valley. The important character of the citadel is amply borne out by the fact that a number of remarkable edifices, obviously public buildings, were grouped within or close to it. Thus at Mohenjo Daro the fortified area contained, besides common residential houses and quarters, the celebrated Great Bath, a large granary, a pillared hall and another notable structure, 230 × 78 ft., which may have been a palace or a collegiate building. At Harappa the most impressive ruins are those of a great granary at a distance of some 100 yards from the citadel to the north.[10]

The authority lodged in the citadels obviously regulated the growth of the main city below where lived the common citizens, craftsmen and labourers in and beside swarming bazars and industrial areas. The lay-out was the result of careful planning preventing haphazard growth and ensuring development according to a neat, seemly pattern. As town-planners, the Indus people were far in advance of the contemporary Mesopotamians who allowed even a most important town like Ur to grow by itself with little or no system in it and can hardly be said to have found their match anywhere in the Old World. The city at Harappa and Mohenjo Daro was divided into numerous habitation blocks (nearly 800 × 1400 yards each) by main streets which were quite straight, sometimes as much as 30 ft. wide, and mee-

ting each other almost at right angles. In the blocks themselves, some latitude was granted to the individual builders with the result that the houses are separated from each other by a net-work of narrow and irregular lanes and alleys. Almost all the streets and lanes seem to have been provided with wells and lamp-posts at frequent intervals. A most striking feature of the towns' lay-out was an elaborate system of drainage unparalleled in any other civilization of the world upto the Roman times. It bears eloquent testimony to the scruplous regard of the Indians for clean habits even at this early period.[17]

The houses varied in size according to the economic status of their owners, but all of them seem to have been of the same general design : a square courtyard with an arrangement of rooms round it or on two or three sides only. They were plain dwellings, with hardly any trace of architectural embellishment. The doors opened, not in the front streets as one would expect, but in the side alleys and as the windows probably occurred high up in the walls, the streets must have provided a dull prospect even during the busy parts of the day. Most of the houses were provided with a private well and bath room with arrangement to drain the water out. The more pretentious houses consisted of two or more storeys as may be inferred from the presence of stairways and beamholes obviously meant for an upper floor.[18] The normal building material was kiln-burnt brick, $11 \times 5{\cdot}5 \times 2{\cdot}5$ inches. No stone was used in either of the cities for building purposes.[19]

No special features distinguished the plan and building of the numerous smaller settlements and towns of the Harappa culture which, as we have seen, were spread over a vast area. The best known of these, Chanhu Daro in Sind, is represented today by ruins covering an area of about 1000×700 ft. and, on a smaller scale, resembles the great cities in many respects. In the minor settlements the houses were, of course, not all of the costly burnt bricks ; mud-bricks and stone-plinths to support superstructures of mud or timber were frequently employed. Only two of the sites, Ali Murad and Sutkagendor, are known to have been fortified.

The culture reflected in the physical remains of the cities and settlements has been rightly described as 'urban.' But the expression

'urban' here should not be taken to denote everything that it might suggest to a modern mind. It is important to remember that the Indus cities, though they possessed many features of modern city-life, were still not far removed from villages and subsisted on the primary basis of agricultural economy. They were centres of industry and trade, but not exclusively so as is the case with modern cities. The townfolk still worked their own fields outside the municipal limits and raised stock which they presumably grazed on a common pasture of the town. The large number of saddle querns yielded by the excavated sites are evidence of agriculture on an extensive scale and it would appear that almost every citizen, whatever his specific place in the town's economic life, was also a farmer who tilled his own plot of corn-land. The surviving remains show that the Harappans cultivated wheat, barley, sessamum, peas, cotton and probably also dates, palms, pomegranates and bananas. There is no direct evidence of the cultivation of rice but according to some historians it may be inferred from the unit of weights. At this stage of our knowledge it is difficult to say if irrigation was practised, though it is not improbable; and there is little enough information about the actual processes of cultivation. The domesticated stock consisted of a variety of animals including humped and humpless cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo, dog, pig, ass, cat and fowl. The economy of the Indus Valley cities was thus a mixed one, not involving a complete severance from rural moorings. This state of affairs was not at all surprising in the ancient world. It has been noted by Frankfurt that the 'cities' of contemporary Egypt and Sumer also displayed a similar economic feature. "The great divergence between city and country-side, between rural and urban life is, in the form in which we are familiar with it, a product of the 'industrial revolution' and emphasis on this contrast mars our perspective when we view earlier situations. About 400 B. C. roughly three-quarters of the Athenian burghers owned some land in Attica...... In the fourteenth century the English town was still a rural and agricultural community as well as a centre of industry and commerce."[20] In India itself, the tradition survived up to quite recent times and still persists in many smaller towns.

On the economic plane the 'urban' element in the Indus cities was provided mainly by the activities of a substantial mercantile class engaged in extensive internal and external trade and by the presence of industrial establishments turning out commercial commodities on

a large scale. Though agriculture played a prominent part in their economy, there is no doubt that a large portion of the cities' wealth was derived from commerce and industry. The Harappa merchants evidently had far-flung trade connections which were carefully maintained and developed. Their caravans passed through the numerous hill villages in the west and brought back bitumen, alabaster, steatite and not improbably an occasional dancing girl. From Kathiawar or the Deccan they seem to have acquired the conch-shell which they used for decorative purposes, as also agate, carnelian, chalcedony and possibly rock crystal. The source of their silver appears to have been Afghanistan or Persia from the latter of which may have come gold, lead and tin also. Copper they probably obtained from Persia or Rajputana and some of their precious stones, such as turquoise and lapis lazuli came from Persia or Afghanistan. From Tibet and Central Asia, they seem to have imported jadeite and the supply of their pines and other fragrant woods was evidently floated down the Indus from Kashmir.[20a] This extensive trade must have been borne along well established and well protected routes, marked by small halting or trading stations. The pack animals were the chief means of transport but numerous clay models indicate the extensive use of ox-carts also for transporting heavy merchandise. The weights used by the merchants were made of limestone, steatite, chert, slate, chalcedony, etc. We have no direct knowledge of the medium of exchange employed, but it was in all probability barter. Actual remains of the scales employed by the traders have been unearthed at some places.

The Indus people understood navigation and carried on a certain amount of seaborne trade.[21] Seals and other articles of the Indus make have been discovered in the excavations of the early cities of Sumer and Akkad in Mesopotamia. These obviously reached the west by way of the sea as such objects do not occur along the land routes through Persia. There are vague indications that the cities had some trade relations even with Crete further to the west. There is no definite evidence about the nature of the merchandise passing between India and the West at this period, but it is probable that a substantial part of the export from India consisted of cotton.[22] The occurrence of the seals in Mesopotamia suggests that the Indian merchants had their agents actually residing in important cities like UR and KISH while the presence of Indianised

Sumerian motives on two Indus seals may indicate similar Sumerian colonies in India. Rarely imports from the semi-nomadic peoples inhabiting the region between the Caucasus and Russian Turkistan also seem to have found their way into the Indus Valley, possibly by an indirect route.[23]

The primary industries of the Indus Valley were those connected with textile, pottery and the manufacture of metal and stone implements and articles of domestic use. The discovery of numerous spindles and spindle-whorls in the excavations bears evidence to the extensive spinning of cotton and wool. Doubts have been raised as to whether the textile industry of Harappa had developed into a specialized craft or the individual families produced the cloth sufficient for their own domestic consumption. The fact that the whorls are made of cheap as well as costly materials lends some colour to the view that spinning was practised in rich and poor households alike but the analogy of the contemporary cities of Western Asia and Egypt strongly suggests that cloth was a marketable commodity also engaging the attention and skill of a special class of workers. Dyeing of fabrics was not unknown as is proved by the actual occurrence of dyers' vats among the remains. There is no evidence of the knowledge or use of flax.

The specialized character of the potters' craft in the Indus cities admits of no doubt. The enormous mass of pottery discovered and the surprising uniformity of type displayed by it bespeaks large production centres worked by hereditary craftsmen. The pottery is wheel-turned and baked in kilns of which actual specimens have been partially preserved. The greater part of it is of a severely plain, utilitarian type, though bearing the distinctive mark of the Indus-make, and includes numerous varieties of pots and household utensils. The decorated examples may be described as a black-on-red-ware, as they usually bear designs painted in black on a deep red, lustrous slip. The designs range from the simplest kind of geometrical patterns to elaborate representations of trees, animals, birds, fish, composite scenes and even human figures.

The Harappa smiths were skilled craftsmen who worked in copper and bronze and occasionally in silver or gold. The metallic manufactures included axes, chisels, knives, razors, spears, fish-hooks, weapons and bowls, cups, vases, ornaments and many kinds of small

objects. The smiths were acquainted with the methods of casting and forging and evidently had mastered the 'lost wax process' also. But it is pointed out by competent authorities that technologically they had not attained the same standard of competence as their brethren of Mesopotamia. Up to the last they made axe-heads which had to be lashed to the shafts while the Mesopotamian smiths had at an early date thought of providing the axe-heads with holes for fitting the shaft. The utensils produced by them are quite ordinary and in the manufacture of blades also they never advanced beyond the simplest flat type. It must, however, be said to their credit that they were the first to manufacture the toothed saw which was unknown to the other civilizations of the Old World.

The extant remains of the civilization enable us to form some idea of the life and habits of the Harappans. They were a voracious meat-eating people and consumed beef, mutton, pork, poultry, fish, turtle and even perhaps the ghariyal as is suggested by the occurrence of half-burnt bones and shells of these animals in the sites. The dress of both men and women consisted of two pieces of cloth: an upper garment covering the left shoulder and passing under the right arm, and a lower piece somewhat resembling the modern dhoti. Men wore long hair and short or close-cropped beards. The upper lip was also close-cropped or sometimes clean-shaven. On festive occasions women probably put on an elaborate fan-shaped head-dress which covered the hair. There were various styles of coiffeurs and pigtails seem to have been known.

On the whole the Harappans appear to have been a gay, pleasure-loving multitude who enjoyed life so long it lasted. As lovers of domestic comfort, they furnished their houses with chairs and bedsteads made of wood, wicker stools, mats, lamps and various other articles. Their main recreations were hunting, fishing, bull-fights, singing, dancing and possibly also dice-throwing. The wealthier people moved through the streets in bullock-carts and may even have possessed a conveyance somewhat resembling the modern Ekka. A deep-seated love of finery was shared alike by men and women, rich and poor. While the ornaments of the rich were made of all kinds of available metals: gold, silver, bronze and copper and various semi-precious stones, the lower classes had to be satisfied with the cheaper sorts of ornaments, pottery, terracotta or shell.

Women specially devoted much care to their personal appearance and made liberal use of cosmetics to improve it.[24]

The Harappans have been accused of being 'on the whole, not an artistic people.' The charge may be justified so far the plain aspect of their houses and the utilitarian character of their pottery, utensils and implements is concerned. But mediocrity in this respect was amply compensated by the high level attained in another. The Harappans seem to have lavished on minor works of art the attention they failed to bestow on their residences and the town in general. Their craftsmen could not put much beauty in cups and dishes, but they produced the celebrated bronze 'Dancing girl' which is universally acclaimed as a splendid piece of art. Their stone implements may be crude and uncouth, but a considerable advance in the sculptors' trade is evidenced by such examples as the sandstone torso of a bearded man and a dancing figure in which the head, the legs and the arms have been fixed separately with metal pegs. Their potters were capable of manufacturing superb clay toys including models of cattle with movable heads, monkeys that slide down a rope, whistles in the shape of birds and admirable little models of carts. Beads of various patterns were turned out in large numbers—gold, silver, copper, faience, steatite, semi-precious stones, shell and pottery. A high degree of advance in the representational art is testified to by the numerous seals (more than 2,000 known so far) discovered in the various sites. They were evidently used for stamping and were usually made of steatite, square or oblong in shape. It has been surmised that 'their primary purpose was to mark ownership of property, but they doubtless also served as amulets and were regularly carried on the persons of their owners'. On them are engraved with great dexterity and considerable realism, a large variety of animals including bull, buffalo, goat, tiger, rhinoceros, elephant and some composite scenes probably having a religious significance. It may not be possible to agree entirely with some writers who are inclined to describe certain pieces of the Harappan art as the finest ever produced in the pre-Hellenic world, but it is certainly wrong to hold the Harappans guilty of moribund indifference to the aesthetic values of life.

The evidence of the seals shows that the Harappans were a literate folk as can also be inferred from the mature city civilization developed by them. Unfortunately the only surviving examples of their writing

are the short inscriptions or legends occurring on the seals and also on some copper tablets accompanied by human and animal figures. Pictographic in origin, this writing was already in the ideographic-cum-syllabic stage and is supposed to have comprised about 270 characters. In spite of many theories regarding its origin and many attempts at decipherment it still remains tantalizingly unread. We are also not in a position to say what writing materials were used though in the opinion of some scholars a small pot discovered at Chanhu Daro is probably an inkpot.

The religious beliefs and practices of Harappa, so far they can be known from the remains, were basically similar to those of the other countries of Old Asia suggesting derivation from an ultimate common stem. The dominant cult was probably that of the worship of the Mother Goddess who seems to be represented by numerous semi-nude female figurines of clay, wearing a girdle and an elaborate head-dress (sometime with a necklace and cheek cones also). The worship of the Mother Goddess was firmly entrenched in the ancient times in the countries of Western Asia where iconic representations of the goddess have been discovered in many centres. One Indus sealing probably represents this deity, in the form of the Earth Goddess, as a woman turned up-side-down with a tree issuing out of the womb, evidently symbolising the fertility of the earth. On the other face of the sealing is depicted a man holding a sickle-shaped knife in his hand with a woman kneeling in a posture of supplication before him. This has been interpreted as a case of human sacrifice to propitiate the goddess and certain other scenes occurring on the seals have been taken as representing sacrifices of animals to her.

The male counterpart of the Mother Goddess was a horned god who figures on some seals and evidently occupied a high place in the Harappa pantheon. He is depicted uniformly in the characteristic cross-legged attitude of a Yogi, nude, wearing a horned head-dress, bangles and possibly necklaces. On one of the seals he is seen surrounded by four animals—tiger, buffalo, elephant and rhinoceros—with two deer under the seat. There is a suggestion of two extra faces, one on each side of the main one, though doubts have been expressed about this by some observers. Following Sir John Marshall most writers regard this fierce-looking deity as the prototype of Siva, the great god

of historic India, who is characterized as *Trimukha* (three-faced), *Pasupati* (lord of animals) and *Maha-Yogi* (the great ascetic). It has been suggested that while the Mother Goddess was the divinity of the common people the proto-Siva probably had his devotees in the upper classes, but this view lacks justification.

The Saivite (or rather the proto-Saivite) element seems to have played a large part in the religious life of the Indus Valley. The bull, Siva's companion and ride of the later times, figures very prominently in the seal engravings and was doubtless a recipient of religious offerings. The prevalence of another integral part of the Saivite cult, the worship of the linga or phallus, among the Indus people is indubitably borne out by the discovery of numerous conical and cylindrical stones which must be phallic emblems for some of them are too realistically done. Some small ring-stones are supposed to represent the Yoni but this can not be regarded as certain.

Zoolatry was also evidently part of the religion or religions of the Indus Valley. It will perhaps be too much to suppose that all the animals depicted on the seals were objects of worship but there is practical certainty about the sacred status of some of them. Wild animals, such as the tiger, which are sometimes shown as standing before feeding troughs or objects which look like braziers or incense-burners were no doubt considered worthy of religious reverence and treated accordingly. As already pointed out, the bull was a particularly sacred animal. The worship of serpents also seems to have been prevalent. The figure of a deity is shown with a hooded naga over the head.

Uncommon historical interest attaches to a seal showing a semi-bovine creature attacking a horned tiger. The figure has been recognized as that of the Sumerian god Ebani or Enkidu who was first created by the goddess Aruru to fight Gilgamesh but subsequently fought as the latter's ally against wild beasts. Another seal depicts a human figure grappling with two tigers—most probably an Indianised version of the Gilgamesh legend itself. It is not definitely known if the Sumerian gods were worshipped by the Indus people themselves or the seals portraying them were manufactured by Indian craftsmen at the orders of Sumerian traders living in the Indus Valley, but the latter seems a more probable alternative.

The Harappans worshipped trees also, notably the pipal, which has remained a popular object of worship in India through the ages. On one seal can be seen a horned goodess enshrined in a tree, probably pipal, being worshipped by a kneeling horned devotee with a composite animal behind. Below are a group of seven pigtailed women described by one authority as priestesses in attendance.

The Great Bath at Mohenjo Daro may suggest that water played an important role in the religious ceremonies of the Indus people. Bathing probably formed an integral part of many religious functions as at the present day. But there is no direct evidence that water itself was worshipped as a deity as is supposed by many writers.

The recent excavation carried out at Harappa ,by Sir R. M. Wheeler has thrown welcome light on the funerary customs of the Harappans. An extensive cemetery (R 37) containing about 3 score graves, which this excavation has unearthed, clearly reveals that inhumation or complete burial was the normal mode of disposal practised by them. Most of the graves were simple pits in which the body was placed directly in the soil. The better class people, however, had a more elaborate burial. One particular grave was found lined internally with bricks and a solitary example of coffin-burial is also known. In the latter case, the body was first wound up in a reed shroud and then placed in a box made of the fragrant Deodar. The bodies were buried in an extended posture, generally north to south, accompanied by various 'grave-goods' including, pottery and personal ornaments.

In some of the minor settlements, the burial customs appear to have been different. For example, the people of a small Harappan site in Bahawalpur probably preferred fractional burial. Cremation seems to have been practised in Sutkagen-dor in Makran and Tarkhanwala Dera in Bikaner. But in the great cities themselves, there was only one mode of disposal—complete burial.

The biggest gap in our knowledge of the Harappans relates to their political organization. What was the form of the authority

that maintained law and order in the great cities and the smaller centres of the Indus Valley? The early excavators of the cities discovered nothing to suggest centralized power. They came across no fortified areas, temples or palaces which could be regarded as seats of concentrated authority. They also noted that the extant remains were of a society without sharp distinctions of class or great disparity of economic status. Accordingly, they envisaged the cities as 'oligarchical commercial republics with only a weak repressive organization'.[25] The conclusion was somewhat surprising as it did not fall in line with our knowledge of the government and politics of the great contemporary civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt where the picture is that of a strong theocratic rule topped by autocratic priest-kings or governors wielding absolute power and providing little scope for the exercise of civic freedom or rights by the individual. The difficulty has been obviated by the excavation of Wheeler. It is now definitely known that each of the two cities was dominated by a strongly fortified citadel equipped with ceremonial gates and terraces and towering far above the level of the city which was itself probably unprotected by any defensive wall or rampart. The most important buildings of the city were grouped within or near this fortified enclosure. In the light of this important discovery, some significant elements of the Harappa culture acquire a new meaning. It is obvious that the authority lodged in the citadel—the authority which ordered the lay-out of the cities, regulated the planning of the streets, maintained the efficient system of drainage and ensured absolute uniformity of weights and measures—was not of the republican or oligarchical type but a highly centralized one, perhaps a king or emperor who levied tributes of grain on the subjects and stored it in great granaries, employed coolie or slave-labour on an extensive scale, and generally controlled the economic and social life of the cities with a strong hand. An outstanding feature of the Harappa culture is its remarkable conservatism and continuity of tradition. The antiquities recorded from the different strata, though covering a period of nearly a thousand years, display little or no variation, growth or evolution: only an unchanging monotony from the beginning almost up to the end. The original ground plan of the houses and the orientation of the streets were maintained almost to the last even though the cities were rebuilt a number of times. In spite of its brisk intercourse with the outside

countries, the Harappan world imbibed no foreign influences strong enoug to alter its native traditions or modes.This rigid unchangeability seems to suggest a strong theocratic element in the Harappa culture. As Piggot delightfully puts it, 'it implies a social system in which the unchanging traditions of the temple were of more account than the ambitions of an individual ruler or the secular instability of the court.' In other words, it seems very probable that, like those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, the government of Harappa was theocratic. The rulers of Harappa were perhaps priest-kings, exercising political power on behalf of gods.[26]

Another striking characteristic of the Harappa culture is its great uniformity in spite of its wide extent. From Rupar to Makran and Kathiawar, the identity of cultural forms is manifest everywhere. The cites of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro, though separated from each other by 250 miles, are even laid out on an almost identical plan. The surmise is not inadmissible that behind the cultural unity of the Indus Valley there was political unity and that Harappa and Mohenjo Daro were not 'independent competing cities' but two seats of the same central authority—a northern and a southern one. The rulers of Harappa seem to have united the whole of the Indus region under one command as kings of the line of Saragaon imposed their will on a large part of Mesopotamia. It is not unlikely that like the Sargonid princes, they assumed high sounding royal titles indicating their great power and influence.

We have no definite information about the builders of this remarkable civilisation. It may be regarded as settled that its authors were not the Vedic Aryans as some Indian historians would require us to believe, but beyond this it is difficult to say anything with confidence.[27] In the absence of literary or epigraphic record we have to fall back upon the testimony of the skeletal remains unearthed during the excavations. Of these, the largest compact group, consisting of about 60 skeletons, came from cemetery R 37 but the anotomical report on it has not yet appeared. The remains about which information is available clearly reveal that there were at least four different racial strains in the Indus population, viz. Proto-Australoid, Mediterranean, Alpinoid and Mongoloid. It is difficult to single out any one of these as the true or the only authors of

the Indus civilisation. It is believed by many that while the Proto-Australoids composed the lower strata of society, the formative and the ruling element of the culture was probably provided by the Mediterranean type 'whose early cultural and social achievements in coastal Europe may well entitle it to the honour'. In India, the main representatives of this type today are the Dravidian-speaking people of the south. This view is supported by many eminent authorities and some apparently cogent arguments have been adduced in its favour, but in the absence of strong positive evidence, it can not be regarded as well established. In the present stage of knowledge, the question of the authorship of the Indus civilization cannot be finally settled. All that we can say is that the racial and social world of the Indus Valley was a mixed one, composed of heterogeneous elements which, however, had blended to form a cultural whole.

It was an Indian civilisation, perfected by people who may with justification be described as Indians, not only from the point of view of geoggraphy but also from the distinctive character of their culture. The Indus civilisation had an individuality of its own. It was in contact withMesopotamia, possibly also with Egypt, but its development was independent of the cultures that grew in these latter countries. By no stretch of imagination can it be regarded as a 'colony' or 'offshoot' of the Sumerian or Egyptian cities. Whatever points of resemblance there are, they have to be explained on the assumption of the cultural kinship of the authors back in the recess of time; no theories envisaging borrowing or direct indebtedness can be upheld. The Indus civilization grew by itself in a locus of its own, though under the influence of the same cultural dynamics which led to the rise of civilizations in the Nile and Tigris-Euphrates Valleys.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The early Aryans in India i. e. the Aryans of the Rigvedic period were also probably unfamiliar with iron and as such may be described as a Bronze Age people. But for the convenience of study their culture has been dealt with in a separate chapter (Ch. V.)

2. e.g. from Bithur (near Kanpur), Fatehgarh (Farrukhabad District U. P.), Pariar (Unnao District, U. P.), Gungeria (Balaghat District, M. P.), Bartol (Ranchi District, Bihar), Mayurbhanj (Orissa).

3. Only two, to be more exact : one from Kallur in Raichur District of Hyderabad and the other from Jorway, Nasik District, Bombay.

4. R. Heine-Geldern is of opinion that the copper hoards discovered in the Gangetic Valley are archaeological traces of the Vedic Aryans (Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, IV, pp. 43-113). The same view was held at one time by Stuart Piggot also (Antiquity No. 72, pp. 173-182). But Piggot has now modified his opinion and believes that the hoards are the work of the refugees who migrated from the Punjab and Sindh on the break-up of the Indus Valley civilization (Prehistoric India, p. 234). No definite opinion on the subject is possible at present. A recent writer is inclined to hold that the hoards represent the culture of the Pre-Aryan occupants of North India (Ancient India, VII, p. 37).

5. This bleak and desolate region is hardly capable of supporting any considerable settled life today. At the time of Alexander's invasion also (c. 325 Sc.), it was much the same as at present. But in the prehistoric times, its climate was certainly moister and not so unfavourable to the growth of settled communities. The ruins of a number of stone-built dams, called Gabarband, in these parts suggest that at some former epoch they received greater rainfall than now. The age of the dams in question is not definietly known but they may well date back to the prehistoric period (Prehistoric India, p. 69-70). The likeliest cause of the present arid condition of the region is the shifting of the edge of the monsoon.

6. Prehistoric India, p. 72. The 'cultures' are named after the type sites, i.e., places where they can be best studied from the actual remains. The first three flourished chiefly in South Baluchistan and are described as "Buffware culture" from the fact of the pottery produced by them being of the 'Buff' type. The main centre of the 'Zhob culture' was the Valley of river Zhob in north Baluchistan. The pottery in these is predominantly red ; hence they are grouped under the general name 'Redware cultures'.

7. Discovered in a cemetery at Mehi.

8. Prehistoric India, p. 112.

9. A. L. Basham, The wonder that was India, p. 13.

10. Prehistoric India, p. 122.

11. The one at Rana Ghundai. The cuttings at Kile Gul Mohammad near Quetta have disclosed the remains of an even earlier settlement but it was a pre-pottery village, evidently of the pre-metal era (Wheeler, Indus Age, p. 9).

12. The process has been fully explained by Gordon Childe in 'Man Makes Himself'. Ch. VI.

13. Though formally in the Bronze Age, the people of the Indus Valley had not entirely given up the use of stone for their tools, vessels and implements. Their civilization may, as such, be described as chalcohthic i.e. wherein both stone and metal were used side by side (Chalcos=metal ; lithos=stone).

14. A list of these will be found in Wheeler, The Indus Age, pp. 95-96. Besides the two great cities, there are two or three market towns and a large number of smaller settlements.

15. The only evidence for the camel in the Indus Valley is a part of a camel's skeleton. The present condition of the region is no doubt the result of the shifting of the monsoon. Other contributory factors may have been considerable 'deforestation necessitated by brick-baking, indifferent upkeep of dams and irrigation channels and the disorganization of agriculture due to invasions' (The Indus Age, p. 8).

16. The Great Bath was a bathing pool, 39 x 32 ft. in area and 8 ft. deep, in the centre of the courtyard of a structure measuring 180 x 108 ft. It was surrounded by a cloister with a number of rooms behind it, which evidently served as 'changing rooms.' The bath could be filled and drained by a vaulted culvert more than 6 ft. high and the water was reached by two flights of steps at the two ends. The entire structure was of fine brickwork and was made watertight with bitumen.

Adjacent to the Bath, was a remarkable building which Sir John Marshall made out to be a 'Hammam' or hot air bath. But recent excavations have revealed that it was a large granary resting on a high platform and probably with a superstructure of timber. Originally it consisted of 27 blocks separated by narrow passages, but subsequently a few additions were made.

The pillared hall measured roughly 80 x 80 ft. and had its roof supported on twenty columns. It may have been an Assembly Hall as it was probably provided with low benches.

The granary at Harappa was, in fact, a group of 12 granaries each 50 x 20 ft., 'arranged into two rows of six each along a passage 23 ft. wide and standing on a platform 4 ft. high'. In the neighbourhood of the granaries there were a number of 'platforms' evidently for pounding grain.

17. Under the streets there was a network of drains, the larger ones of which were provided with 'manhole covers' of brick for regular cleaning. The private drains of the houses discharged into these.

18. The surviving remains include some very small houses, or rather cottages, of two rooms only which were grouped together in certain parts of the cities, e.g. near the granaries and the platform referred to above. These are usually described as 'workmen's' quarters' or 'coolie lines'.

19. The Harappans were the first to use burnt brick on a large scale, though it was known in Western Asia at an earlier date.

20. Birth of civilization in the Near East, p.165.

20a. Piggot, Prehistoric India, p. 210.

21. Though among the remains of the cities there are only two representations of ships and these also only of 'small river vessels'. The recent discovery of Harappan and post-Harappan sites along the coastal tracts exclusively in Kathiawar clearly shows that Harappan colonisers arrived in these parts in sea-going ships.

22. This may be inferred from the discovery of the impression of a Harappan seal on a bale of cotton in Mesopotamia. The imports from Sumer probably consisted of precious metals and raw materials.

23. Piggot, Prehistoric India, p. 210.

24. The use of collyrium, face-paints and lipsticks was definitely known.

25. This view was first put forth by Sir John Marshall.

26. Originally propounded by Wheeler, this view is now accepted by many writers including Piggot.

27. There is such a world of difference between the culture of the Indus Valley and the early cultures of the Aryans as revealed in the Rigveda that it is impossible to attribute the origin of both to the same people. The dissimilarities between the two have been repeatedly commented upon by scholars and only the principal ones need be noted here. The most important of these is that while the Indus civilization was urban, the Rigvedic Aryans were a rural people most of whom had probably never seen a city before their entry into India. In the Indus Valley, the Mother Goddess appears to have been the highest deity while goddesses occupy only a minor place in the pantheon of the Rigveda. The Harappans revered the bull but there is no proof that it was considered sacred by the early Aryans. In the Indus Valley phallic worship enjoyed great vogue, but it was repugnant to the early Aryans as is clearly implied by the derisive epithet Sisnadeva applied by them to the Dasa-Dasyus. The Harappa people were literate ; among the Rigvedic people even the rishis were probably ignorant of the art of writing. The horse which was unknown to Bronze Age India was a popular quadruped with the Aryans and was tamed by their ancestors even in the original homeland. The earliest of the Vedic Aryans fought with Varma and Sipra with which the warriors of the Indus Valley were totally unfamiliar. For a full discussion of the subject and

for the impossibility of the one civilization being the natural growth of the other, see Sir John Marshall, Mohenjo-daro, Vol. I, Ch. VIII.

Mr. A. L. Basham points out that the world is indebted to the Indus Valley people for certain advances in husbandry. According to him the Harappans were probably the first to use cotton and the domestication of the water buffalo in the civilized world may also date from their time.

CHAPTER IV

The end of the cities

Indications of contact with the cities of Mesopotamia constitute at present the only basis of conclusions regarding the date of the city civilisation of the Indus Valley. As the evidence stands, the intercourse between the Indian towns and Sumeria would seem to have been at its optimum during c. 2300—2000 B. C. There is some reason to believe that contact was maintained under the First Dynasty of Babylon whose overthrow by the Kassites is now thought to have taken place about 1600 B. C., but 'no trace of contact with India can be found in Mesopotamia after the Kassite invasion.' On the other hand, the evidence of relations in the pre-Sargonid period is, though not altogether wanting, very scanty. On the whole, therefore, the thousand years from c. 2500 to c. 1500 B. C. may be taken to roughly represent the age of the Indus Valley towns which probably attained the peak of their prosperity about 2300—2000 B. C. The seven strata of buildings disclosed by the excavations at Mohenjo Daro would, on a reasonable estimate, suggest an overall period of about a thousand years for the city's existence. It is, however, to be noted that the rising of the sub-soil water may have placed the evidence of some earlier habitation-layers beyond the archaeologists' reach and the mature aspect of the oldest known remains would normally be taken to imply a considerable period of early evolution'.

It is, then, likely that the cities were deserted and fell into ruins about the middle of the second millennium B. C. How did this happen?

An examination of the Harappan antiquities clearly shows that during the last phases of its existence the culture was already showing signs of decline. The pottery produced was now of an inferior type; the brick-work had fallen off the usual high standard; the old stately houses had been divided into mean apartments. Civic authority must have been considerably relaxed for unscrupulous people were making encroachments upon the streets, even on the fortifications themselves, and kilns were being built in the middle of lanes. The texture of the civilisation was obviously wearing out and approaching disintegration.

There were perhaps many factors contributing to this sad end. The edge of the monsoon had *probably* started moving now, slowly converting the region into the arid tract that it is today. Repeated floods making rebuilding necessary could not but adversely affect economic prosperity which must also have been hit hard by the cessation of trade relations with the west. Unknown political factors may have been at work from within. But the archaeological evidence would seem to imply that the final end was brought about by invaders from outside. In recent years an attempt has been made to emphasize the old theory ascribing the end of the cities mainly to the devastation of flood,[2] but, 'there appears to be sufficient archaeological and other material to prove that the civilisation of the Indus Valley was swamped wholesale by a ruthless and very powerful enemy.'

The catastrophe respons ible for the collapse of the cities involved the entire Bronze Age world of North-Western India. The village communities of Baluchistan were also naturally caught into its vortex and suffered great loss. In the first half of the second millennium B. C. the peasant settlement at Rana Ghundai which had had by now a more or less continuous life of about 2000 years was pillaged and burnt by invaders. About the same time some of the villager of Makran were ousted from their lands by an alien folk. Positive archaeological data provide only faint traces of what must have been an extensive movement of fighting bands over Baluchistan and Makran at this time. In the cities of the plains the excavations tell a story of great trouble and disturbance. Aggressive war parties, coming evidently from the colder regions of the north, as they provided their small hutments with fire-places, soon overthrew the Harappans in some of the smaller settlements of Sind, including Chanhu Daro. At Harappa preparations seem to have been made to resist the onrush of the invaders. The defences of the city were strengthened and one gateway was completely barred up. But the marauders could not be kept away for long. The town evidently fell, was probably sacked and new people founded a settlement in its ruins.[3]

At. Mohenjo Daro the violence of the invasion is manifest. "Men, women and children were massacred in the streets and houses and were left lying there or, at the best, crudely covered without last rites". In one room alone were found the skeletons of thirteen unfortunate persons

simultaneously done to death. In one of the lanes lay a group of skeletons belonging to murdered persons. Another area yielded nine skeletons, including five of children—apparently the result of violent death. A group of five persons including a woman met their death in a public well-room. Sir John Marshall's report speaks of "the fire which consumed many of the Mohenjo-daro buildings". These grim tragedies constitute the last episode in the long history of Mohenjo Daro. The plundered city was probably deserted by the invaders and the invaded alike and is no longer heard of.

Who were the invaders who thus carried fire and sword to the fair land of the Indus and destroyed the first cities of India? The answer must necessarily be in the realm of doubt at present but the fact that the period about 1500 B. C. when the last traces of the Indus civilisation probably disappeared from view is also now generally regarded as that of the beginning of the Aryan invasions of India cannot but be considered significant. In itself, it raises a presumption that the two events—the end of the Indus cities and the coming of the Aryans—were not unconnected and this view gains considerably in strength when the testimony of the Rigveda, the earliest document of the invading Aryans, is properly scrutinized. Wheeler has drawn pointed attention to the fact that the Rigveda represents the Aryan warriors as coming into conflict with native foes, called *Dasa* or *Dasyu*, who fought from their walled cities or fortified enclosures (*pur*), described as broad (*prithvi*), wide (*urvi*), metallic (*ayasi*), sometimes probably built of raw unbaked bricks (*ama*) and sometimes of stone (*asmamayi*). One of the characteristic epithets of Indra, the war god of the invaders, is *Puramdara* (destroyer of forts) and it is proudly claimed by the poets that he "destroyed citadel after citadel here with strength" (RV, I, 553). In the opinion of earlier writers, ignorant of the Indus remains, these forts were "either mythological or were simply places of refuge against attack, ramparts of hardened earth with palisades and a ditch," —a simple device that even a primitive people could easily set up. But the discovery of the Indus forts and fortified settlements seems to put a new face on the matter. Indeed, the references to the smiting down of foes by Indra and his war bands and the possible allusions to the burning of cities and bursting of dams in the Rigveda[4] read like a literary record of the sufferings of the Indus Valley people, testified to by archaeolo-

gical evidence already discussed. Of the various appellatives used to denote the Dasa-Dasyus in the Rigveda, there are some, *e.g.*, *akarman* (without rites), *adevayu* (non-worshippers of gods), *abrahman*, *ayajin* (non-sacrificers), *avrata* (without ceremonies) and *anyavrata* (following strange rites), that furnish an accurate description of the Harappans from the Aryan point of view as the cultural traditions and religious practices of the two peoples were altogether different from each other. Others, such as *krishnavarna* (dark-skinned) and *anasa* (without nose) are true of the large number of Proto-Australoids present in the Indus population. The Dasa-Dasyus are also said to have been rich and in possession of much gold—again a fitting description of the 'wealthy Harappans'. Another characteristic epithet of the Dasyus, *Sisnadeva* (worshippers of phallus) cannot fail to remind us of the wide prevalence of phallic worship in the Indus Valley There thus seems to be a substantial case for the view, now held by many writers led by Wheeler, that the final disappearance of the cities, already devitalised by other causes, was due to the onset of the Aryan tribes whose priests composed the Rigveda.

If the invaders were not the Rigvedic clans, they were apparently others who poured into India not long before their advent, and may be supposed to have been either an earlier wave of Aryan immigration or groups of people uprooted from the west and driven into the Indus Valley by the advancing Aryans. It seems hard to dissociate the end of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro from the wide disturbance caused by the movements of the Aryans in the second millennium B. C.

The cities fell and with them their urban organisation, but not in its entirety the legacy of the civilisation that had given rise to them. It was impossible that such a higly organised culture would fade out without in any way affecting the course of furture development, and subsequent history clearly reveals some of its traditions persisting with vital strength. The Horned God of the Harappans evidently got a place in the Aryan pantheon and rose to new heights of importance as Siva of historic India. The allied cults of the worship of the phallic enblem and bull were also similarly taken over and integrated into the texture of later Hinduism. The Mother Goddess reappears subsequently and can be clearly recognised as an important element in the make-up of the august deities called Sakti. Veneration of trees, specially the

pipal, is upto this day an important feature of the Hindu religion and the zoolatry of the Indus Valley has also left an indelible impress on it. Some competent authorities consider it not unlikely that the Indian script and punch-marked coins are also derived from the Indus Valley civilisation, though this is regarded as highly doubtful by others. Apparently, the arts and crafts of Harappa could not have died out suddenly and it has even been contended by some that the bull-capital of Asoka's pillar at Rampurwa vaguely reminds one of the seal-engravings of the Indus Valley. It is a large debt indeed that we owe to the people of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Of about a dozen datable Indus seals in Mesopotamia, two were found in the pre-Sargonid levels, six in the Sargonid strata and the rest in the Larsa-Kassite deposits. For a full discussion of the problem of date, see Wheeler, The Indus Age, pp. 84-93. Sir John Marshall's date, c. 3250-2750 B. C., is based largely on a chronology of the Mesopotamian cities calling for readjustment in view of recent discoveries. The date c. 3000-2500 B. C. or c. 3000-2000 B. C. proposed by others also appears a little too high.
2. M. R. Sahni (Man in Evolution, 1952, pp. 153-54).
3. These people buried their dead in the cemetery H and are called the 'Cemetery H' people. It may, however, be pointed out that the Harappa and the Cemetary H strata are separated by a barren deposit.
4. Piggot, Pre-historic India, pp. 261-2.

CHAPTER V

The early Aryans in India: The age of the Rigveda

A. THE ARYAN IMMIGRATIONS AND THE CONQUEST OF NORTH WESTERN INDIA

The fall of the Indus cities, if we are right in ascribing it to the movement of the Aryans, was not an isolated event but part of a general political stir affecting many other centres of civilisation. The Rigvedic Aryans were only a few of the many tribes that issued forth from a common homeland early in the second millennium B. C. to conquer and settle in new places. There is no unanimity of opinion among scholars about the location of this homeland and one of the most interesting discussions of the present time centres round this important question. It is impossible here to discuss the various theories but 'the most reasonable hypothesis, and one which seems to best satisfy the demands of philology and archaeology', is probably that which locates the cradle of the Aryans in the South Russian steppes and the land eastwards to the Caspian Sea[1]. In the third millennium B. C., this region was inhabited by a number of allied tribal peoples sharing a more or less common culture based on a crude, semi-nomadic pastoral-cum-agricultural economy.[2] To this concourse of tribes is given the generic name 'Indo-European'. About the beginning of the second millennium, a great commotion overtook the tribal world inducing large groups to migrate in different directions. The factors leading to this disturbance can only be guessed at this distance of time. The steppe-land was probably overpopulated, the pastures were perhaps drying up slowly and there might have been some kind of pressure exerted by other nomadic peoples from the rear. Whatever the cause, large sections of the tribesfolk left their ancestral land and ventured forth into the world in expanding waves of migration. The activities of some of these have found record,

though quite inadequate, in archaeological material brought to light in Western Asia. One group, evidently passing round the Black Sea, crossed the straits into Asia Minor and fused with the local population to form the great empire of the Hittite. Of the others, who went to the east, some journeyed across the Caucasus to the fringes of Iran and, forming the ruling section of the Kassites, made onslaughts on the First Dynasty of Babylon which they ultimately swamped. Farther afield, some of the migrants, the Mitanni, established themselves on the Euphrates and founded a strong kingdom there. The remainder of the eastern group, probably known by the general name 'Arya,' pressed forward and for a time settled in Bactria or some adjoining region as a kind of second home. A few centuries later, these were on the move again ; one section passed on to Iran to become the ancestors of the ancient Persians (modern Parsis) while others crossed the Hindukush into Afghanistan and proceeded towards India.

At its farthest eastern extremity, the wave of migrations thus hit India and perhaps engulfed the Indus cities as narrated above. If the Aryan immigrants really overthrew the towns, the causes of their success will probably be found mainly in the weakened organisation of the cities and their own military superiority and northern hardiness. The invaders were culturally not as advanced as the civilised people of Harappa, but in respect of military organisation and equipment, they were their superriors. The surviving remains of the Indus Valley clearly show that, though not ignorant of the art of fortification, the city people were no great fighters. They had developed no specialised weapons of war;[3] they were lacking in defensive armaments such as helmet or armour and the slow ox-cart was their best means of transport. They were, the evidence would suggest, a peace-loving agricultural and mercantile community, not caring much for the hazards of war. The new-comers were definitely much better equipped for armed conflict. In place of the cumbersome ox-cart, they had their light and fast-moving chariots : they were the proud owners of horses which gave them a high degree of mobility in war and which their adversaries did not possess. They went to battle in defensive armour (*varma*) and helmet (*sipra*) and from the Mesopotamians they had adopted the use of a more effective instrument of war than the Harappans ever produced, *viz.* the shaft-hole axe. Man to man they were probably superior to the *Dasas* or *Dasyus* of

Harappa whose material traditions and organisation had apparently lost much of their earlier vitality and who suffered from the usual weaknesses of a civilised society in decline. The success of their arms in India would seem to be almost a foregone conclusion.

The Nordic peoples did not come in a solid, compact mass. The Aryan onset on India did not take the form of a concerted advance, planned and directed by a single authority under a unified command. It was rather a diffused episode covering centuries during which diverse clans and tribes moved into the country at different periods under their own leaders. Besides the archaeological evidence of the Indus Valley, if it can be related to their advance, our only source of knowledge abut their earliest activities in India is the Rigveda, the oldest extant record of the Indo-European peoples. The Veda has not preserved any distinct memories of the immigrations [4] but it is certainly the work of an invading people who had to struggle hard against the native population before they could settle in the country. The vast collection of 1017 or 1028 *suktas* (hymns) is the composition of a number of priest-poets, technically known as *rishis* or seers, and is divided into ten books (*mandalas*) of which II-VII, each attributed to a different priestly family, seem to be the earliest, and X, the latest. Among the authors of the hymns there appear the names of a few ladies also. The date of the composition of the Rigveda is controversial. Some earlier authorities claimed a high antiquity for it—even as early as 6000 B. C. was actually suggested. More scholars favour the date c. 3000, 2500 or 2000 B. C. for the *Rik* literature. But in view of the chronology of the Indus cities accepted in these pages even this comparatively modest date needs revision. There is doubtless much ancient material incorporated in the body of the Veda but it is clear that it was redacted and arranged in the present form after its authors had settled in India, *i.e.*, not before the end of the Indus cities (c. 1500 B. C.). The general trend of scholarly opinion now seems to be that the Veda reflects the condition of the Aryans during the period c. 1500-1000 B. C. Accordingly this period may be called the 'Age of the Rigveda.'

By the time the Rigveda assumed its final form (c. 1000 B. C.), the conquest of a large part of North-Western India along with the adjacent borderland by the Aryans was already an accom-

plished fact. Aryan tribes were settled on the Kubha (Kabul), Krumu (Kurram), Suvastu (Swat) and Gomati (Gumal) in Afghanistan and numerous Aryan colonies had been founded in the valleys of the Indus and its tributaries, the rivers Vitasta (Jhelum), Asikni (Chenab), Vipas (Beas) and Sutudri (Sutlej). Powerful Aryan tribes had taken up their abodes in the valleys of the Sarasvati (Sarsuti near Ambala), Drishadvati (probably the Ghaggara) and the Apaya rivers. Aryan chiefs were already fighting battles on the banks of the Jamuna and their outer settlements probably reached the Ganges[6]. The main burden of colonisation was in the Punjab and the neighbouring tracts to which the name *Sapta-sindhava* (the country of the seven rivers or many rivers) was given. The land beyond the Ganges or south of the Jamuna was still largely unknown and lay outside the political and geographical horizon of the Aryans.[7] The Rigveda mentions the Himalayas one of whose peaks—Mujavat—is described as the source of Soma but makes no allusion to the Vindhya Hills.

It is clear from many passages in the Rigveda that these conquests of the Aryans were not easily accomplished. In the defence of their hearths and culture, the non-Aryan Dasa-Dasyus put up a valiant resistance and yielded the ground only after desperate fights. While the Aryan warriors, invoking Indra, destroyed their citadels and burnt their cities, Dasa chieftains like Ibilisa, Sambara and Bheda made heroic efforts to arrest their progress and not infrequently carried out counter-offensives to retrieve the lost ground. The native tribes even formed confederacies[8] and put in the field large armies, sometimes as much as 10,000 strong. The early Aryan settlements stood in constant fear of their surprise raids which resulted in much loss of life and cattle. But the military superiority of the new-comers enabled them to overcome the opposition and the sons of the soil went fighting down.

Many of the vanquished natives, including women, were reduced to slavery or serfdom by the conquerors with the result that the word Dasa soon began to be regarded as synonymous with slave. Others, retiring from the Punjab under the pressure of the invasions, found shelter in the regions farther to the east and south where the victors could not immediately pursue them. It must, however, not be supposed that all the non-Aryans had to

share this cruel fate. In fact not a few of their chiefs made peace with the Aryans and were accepted as allies by them. Aryan leaders eagerly sought the co-operation of friendly non-Aryan tribes in their quarrels with rival Aryan groups.[9] Aryan *rishis* (priest-poets) received the patronage of non-Aryan princes and extolled their munificence in the hymns[10].

The best known of the Aryan tribes which thus entered India and expanded upto the Upper Gangetic valley during the latter half of the second millennium B. C. (*i.e.*, the age of the Rigveda) was that of the Bharatas, occupying the land of the Sarasvati, Drishadvati and Apaya rivers. Its ruling section was probably known as Tritsu. Among the other important tribes mention may be made of the Srinjayas who probably lived in the region later known as Panchala; the Purus who were the western neighbours of the Bharatas, and the Druhyus, Anus, Turvasas and Yadus who held the country between the Ravi and the Chenab. The Rigveda also names Krivis, Matsyas, Chedis, Gandharis and many others all of whom cannot be located with certainty.

Though the tribes were surrounded on all sides by hostile elements, there was no complete amity or harmony among them and not infrequently they took up arms against each other for the augmentation of their power and wealth and the gratification of tribal pride. As already noted, they did not hesitate even to seek the assistance of non-Aryan allies in such contests. The more important of them seem to have been arrayed into two rival groups—the Bharatas and the Srinjayas on the one side, and the Purus, Druhyus, Yadus, Anus and Turvasas on the other. The course of the rivalry between the two groups is only dimly perceived. At first the Bharatas probably suffered some reverses and an old hymn describes how they were 'shorn of their pastures like the staves for driving cattle, stripped of their leaves and branches.' But soon the tables were reversed and they began to triumph over their adversaries. The Bharata-Tritsu king Divodasa is lauded as a great conqueror who fought successfully against the Purus, Druhyus and others and from a well-known verse we learn about a crushing defeat inflicted by a Srinjaya chief on the Turvasas and their allies, the Vrichivants. The conflict finally led to a great battle in which the Bharata king Sudas defeated a coalition

of ten tribes headed by the Purus. This celebrated 'Battle of Ten Kings' (*Dasarajna*) is described in three poems of the Rigveda. It is said that Sudas, son of Pijavan and perhaps a descendant of Divodasa, for some reason dismissed Visvamitra from the office of his family-priest and appointed Vasishtha in his place. The disgruntled *purohita* persuaded the Purus and their allies to attack Sudas. In the battle which followed the Purus and their friends were supported by five other tribes from the north-west[11], but victory favoured the Bharatas and their opponents were defeated with heavy losses on the banks of the Parushni (Ravi). The traditional account of the battle greatly exaggerates the role of the Brahmana *purohita* but the historical character of the *Dasarajna* was never in doubt. After the wars of the Aryans with the Dasa-Dasyus, it was the most important political happening of the Rigvedic period and definitely established the supremacy of the Bharatas in the Aryan fold. The defeated Purus were probably absorbed by the victors and the two coalesced to form a new people, the Kurus, whom we soon afterwards find controlling the old land of the Bharatas.

B. ARYAN CULTURE IN THE AGE OF THE RIGVEDA

The Rigveda represents the earliest phase of Aryan culture in India when the pattern of life imported by the immigrant tribes was still largely uninfluenced by the indigenous traditions. The mixing of cultures no doubt started as soon as the Aryans settled in the country. Native kings like Balvutha and Taruksha adopted the civilisation of the victors and patronised Aryan *rishis*. Many native women passed into the Aryan households as lawful wives or concubines and brought some of their own culture into the new environment. Contact was established through non-Aryan slaves and serfs working for the Aryan masters and also through the intercourse of friendly non-Aryan tribes with the newcomers. It is pointed out that the language of the Rigveda reveals[1] certain peculiarities which are not found in any other Indo-European language including that of the Iranians and which were obviously the result of non-Aryan influence. But it seems that the process of fusion was slow in the beginning. The general state of tension and the frequent outbreak of active hostility between the two groups of people, coupled perhaps with the victor's pride and the sullen attitude of a culturally superior party polit

suppressed, prevented free intercourse on an extensive scale. The mode of life reflected in the Rigveda really shows very little trace of having been modified by native conditions. It is important to remember that in no sense can the Veda be regarded as a complete record of the life of even N. W. India during the second half of the second millennium B. C. It is a more or less purely Aryan document and tells us very little about the life and manners of the vast majority of the people whose racial affinities were non-Aryan. The glimpses that we get in it are of the Aryan conquerors of the north-west, not of India or even a part thereof.

With the fall of the Indus cities, the Punjab and upper Sind where the Aryan settlements were largely concentrated in the age of the Rigveda, lapsed back into the pre-civic economy and became a land of villages. The effete tradition of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro could not absorb the Aryans and perished *materially*. The invaders spread over the country in hamlets and villages and settled down to a rustic life. They abandoned their former nomadism completely but in other respects displayed very little advance over the Indo-European days. Their simple villages were aggregates of a number of small hutments, probably made of wood and reed or bamboo, and not much different from the houses to be seen in Indian villages to-day. The only feature distinguishing them from the dwellings of the non-Aryan neighbours was the presence, in each one of them, of a fire-place (*agnisala*) as the centre of the domestic ritual. The villages may sometimes have been of considerable dimensions but the Rigvedic Aryans were definitely a rural people without cities. The word *nagara* denoting a town does not occur in the Veda, nor is a single city mentioned by name.

The Rigveda records the throb of a society which, though far from being primitive, was still basically tribal. The Aryan world was organised into tribes (*jana*) of which the more important ones have already been referred to. The tribes were made up of more compact groups called *vis*, which probably corresponds to a clan and was itself composed of smaller units called *grama*, 'a term which later regularly meant village but in the Rigveda usually refers to a group of kinsfolk rather than a settlement' and may as such be rendered as 'sept.'[12] The *grama* consisted of a group of cognate partriarchal and patrilineal

families (*kula*) formnig the basic social and political units of Aryadom. The system thus rested on a tribal rather than a territorial basis and the members of the tribes shared a strong feeling of unity and compactness against outsiders.

Cutting across the tribal structure, however, there were already distinctions of class tending to lead to a horizontal stratification of the Aryan society. Even as early as the Indo-European days, there was probably a substratum of warriors and chieftains among the 'Aryan' tribes 'enjoying some kind of social eminence and forming a sort of tribal aristocracy. The immigrants into India were obviously led by persons of this class whose exalted position marked them off from the common tribesmen. They constitued the *Kshatra*, *Kshatriya* or *Rajanya* section *i.e.*, the nobility, and monopolised the ruling power in the tribes. As kingship among the Rigvedic Aryans was normally hereditary, their circle was practically exclusive and it was almost impossible for persons of non-Rajanya birth to secure admittance into it. This well-defined coterie of ruling families among the early Aryans of India was the nucleus of the *Kshatriya* or warrior caste of the later times. Its main distinctive mark was the nobility of birth; the *Kshatriya* in the Rigveda is synonymous with the *Rajanya*, *i.e.*, a person belonging to a ruling family. He was no doubt the leader in war and raid but was not the only fighter of the tribe. It was still the custom for all tribesmen to fight when occasion demanded and a specialised exclusive profession of arms had probably not arisen.[13]

Next to the *Rajanyas* were the priests who composed hymns in praise of deities and officiated at big sacrifices. They were designated as *Brahman* or *Brahmana* and formed a highly respected section of society. There is good reason to believe that there was already a considerable hereditary element in this class also as in that of the *Rajanyas*. In the Veda we get some family-lists of *rishis* (hymn-makers) showing that the work of composing hymns had been going on in their families for a long time, and the expressions *Brahmana* (denoting the son of a Brahman or priest) and *Brahmaputra* occurring in the Rigveda, though not frequently, also suggest a hereditary bias. Further it is to be noted that even in the Rigvedic period the ritual of the *Srauta*, though not of the domestic, worship had become highly complex, necessitating

the employment of a number of specialists and experts, and could hardly have been carried out properly without a class of hereditary priests.[14]

The common people who were not born in the nobility and did not take up the vocation of priests were known as *Vis* or Vaisya (the commonalty) and formed the economic backbone of the Aryan world. They were the people who normally did the farming and trading and devoted themselves to the various practical arts such as those of the metal-smith, chariot-maker, leather-dresser, potter etc. They naturally ranked socially inferior to the Brahmanas and the Rajanyas but were still respected members of the Aryan society and enjoyed all the privileges of freemen.

The three classes named above probably existed among the Aryans even before they entered India. In the new homeland a fresh problem of social adjustment had to be faced. Whatever the differences in their own fold, the Aryans were still bound together by their *varna* or colour, the external expression of their racial and cultural kinship. But a wide gulf separated them from the Dasa-Dasyus—the earlier inhabitants of the country whom they subdued. Many of these were enslaved and served their masters as menials or practised the low arts and crafts within the pale of Aryan authority. They had evidently to be given a social status lower than that of the lowest freemen of the tribes. And thus was formed a fourth class which received the name Sudra. The exact meaning of this enigmatic word is still obscure. But it is not improbable 'that it was originally the name of some prominent Dasa tribe conquered and enslaved by the Aryans and later became the generic name for all non-Aryans who were enslaved or had to accept a very low position in the Aryan fold 'just as Karian became synonymous with slave at Athens.' It may be regarded as certain that only the low-placed natives were relegated to the position of Sudra. The friendly native kings were no doubt accepted as *Rajanyas*, many native priests as *Brahmanas*, and the more affluent commoners as *Vaisyas*.

The inclusion of the Dasa-Sudras completed the framework of the 'four-class' (*Chaturvarnya*) system of the Hindus. By the time the compilation of the Rigveda was finished the distinction of the classes was already well understood and was backed by a formal

theory assigning a divine origin to the classification. Thus the *Purusha-sukta* of the Rigveda (X. 90) informs us that when the gods divided and sacrificed the Purusha (the Primeval Giant), "the Brahmana was his mouth, the Rajanya was made of his arms, the being called Vaisya was his thighs, the Sudra sprang from his feet." The *sukta* in question belongs to an admittedly late stratum of the Rigveda and it is the only hymn in the entire collection bearing a clear reference to the formation of the classes. But it seems certain that the division existed in the Aryan society throughout the Rigvedic period. Even in the early hymns there are traces of classification into the holy power (*Brahma*), kingly power (*Kshatram*) and the commonalty (*Visah*) and the four-fold division is also hinted at. That social stratification existed among the Aryans from quite early times is further borne out by the evidence of such conditions in the other early Indo-European communities, specially the Iranians.[15]

But classes are not the same as castes though they 'are the generic soil from which caste systems have grown at various places and times.' Casteism implies much more than a simple classification. Castes are classes or sub-divisions of classes immensely hardened, governed by strict rules of connubium and commensality and only a little less strict restrictions on the choice of profession. Viewed from this standpoint, the Rigvedic society was classified but casteless. There existed no rigid restrictions on inter-marriage or interdining, the chioce of profession (though naturally determined largely by inheritance) was not formally limited and ideas about ceremonial purity or defilement by touch were unknown. There are no actual instances of inter-class marriages in the Rigveda itself, but later tradition has preserved the memory of many such cases *e.g.*, *rishi* Syavasva marrying the daughter of a king, king Asanga taking as wife a lady of the Angirasa family and the sage Kakshivan marrying the daughters of king Svanaya.[16] Persons of non-priestly birth were still admitted to the profession of priests if they possessed the requisite qualification as is clear from the case of Visvamitra Rajanya, who figures in the Rigveda as the author of numerous hymns including the Gayatri, and Devapi, the author of hymn X. 98, who was the brother and priest of king Santanu. Members of the priestly families also sometimes took up non-priestly crafts (e.g. the case of

some descendants of the sage Bhrigu who were expert chariot-makers).[17] Of ceremonial purity there is no trace in the Rigveda. Nowhere is there even the slightest hint that the touch of a Sudra or taking food prepared by him polluted a member of the higher classes. The Sudra slave was treated as a member of the family of his master and freely moved about the house doing the household jobs including the cooking in some cases.

The social system was thus marked by a considerable degree of elasticity and lacked the rigidity characteristic of the present day caste. Indeed there is no evidence that the solidarity of the Aryan society was being affected to any considerable extent by the presence of the classes. It may be pointed out that the Purusha-sukta makes the Brahmana, Rajanya and Vaisya identical with the various parts of the Purusha suggesting that they were regarded as members of a more or less undifferentiated organism. The only real cleavage was between the Arya and the Dasa who were separated by a world of racial, cultural and political differences. The *natives* were the *Dasa-varna* while the others were the *Arya-varna.* The Rigveda recognises only these two *varnas* signifying the great difference of colour (race and physical features) between those they indicated. The later use of the word *varna* to designate all the four classes is unknown to it.

The economic life of the tribes followed the simple pre-civic mixed pastoral and agricultural pattern. Corn-growing and stock-breeding formed the main occupations of the people. There do not occur many references to agricultural processes in the Rigveda but enough is known to show that the tilling was done, as to-day, by means of ox-drawn ploughs fitted with metal-shares to make furrows (*sita*) in the fields (*kshetra*). The subsidiary processes of reaping, winnowing, storing etc. were also practically the same as we find them in the Indian villages at present. The corn grown was designated as *dhana* or *yava*, which probably stands for barley here. Artificial irrigation was not unknown but its exact nature cannot be ascertained at present.[18]

From the various allusions to cattle in the Rigveda it would appear that stock-breeding was considered more important than even agriculture—a feature indicative of the strong pastoral inheritance of the Aryans.. Cattle constituted the chief

wealth of the tribesmen who devoted much attention to rearing them. Such was the importance attached to cattle that they were even regarded as a sort of currency to valuate the worth of other commodities. "The farmer prays for increase of cattle, the warrior expects cattle as booty, the sacrifical priest is rewarded for his services with cattle." Cattle-lifting was one of the main purposes of the frequent predatory raids of the tribes into the territories of their neighbours. Besides cows and bullocks, sheep, goats and asses were also domesticated. The horse was, of course, a favourite animal of the charioteering Aryans.

The Aryan mode of life in the Rigvedic period did not provide much scope for specialisation in industry or craft. The people still produced their own cloth as they grew their corn and bred their cattle. The weaving was done on a loom and we know by what names the warp, woof and shuttle were called. The main specialised crafts appear to have been those of the carpenter (*takshan*), chariot-builder or wheel-wright (*rathakara*), leather-worker (*charmamna*) and metal-smith (*ayaskara*). The carpenter made household furniture, carts for transport, door-posts, window-sills and other useful articles. He is also said to have built portable houses of wood which could be taken to pieces and put together again at different places, but nothing is known of the appearance or mechanism of these. The leather-worker manufactured foot-wear, bow-strings, thongs, reins, lashes of whips and possibly casks or bags. He utilised all sorts of skins, but the most common material was probably the hide of the ox. The *rathakara* occupied an exalted position among the professional craftsmen and was an honoured member of society.

The metal-smiths had attained a considerable degree of skill and it has been noted that they made better implements than the smiths of Harappa. Out of the metal known as *ayas* they fashioned weapons, utensils, tools, ploughshares, needles, razors, and various small things used in making houses and chariots. The word *ayas* is related to the Latin *aes* and most probably stands for bronze or copper in the Rigveda. It seems unlikely that the use of iron was known to the Vedic Aryans at this early date.[19]

Goldsmiths and jewellers formed a distinct class of skilled workers. The Aryans no doubt used a good deal of pottery, but it is difficult to say whether ceramics was a specialised or a

domestic craft. Many archaeologists are now inclined to think that the pottery produced was of the 'Painted Grey' type of which specimens have been discovered in early centres in Northern and North-Western India.

Workers of the various categories enumerated above enjoyed considerable social prestige. No stigma attached to the pursuit of the useful trades and crafts as was the case in the subsequent days. The callings of the priests and the Rajanyas were no doubt regarded as reflecting a higher stage of culture than the others but the professions themselves were not considered degrading or unworthy of freemen. The metal-smiths and the wheel-wrights are referred to in some hymns with apparent respect and instances are not wanting of members of ruling or priestly families taking up the so-called 'low vocations.' Though the victories over the *Dasa.Dasyus* gave them many slaves, the Aryans, specially the *Vis*, took active personal interest in the crafts throughout the Rigvedic period.

The information regarding the trade and commerce of the early Aryans in India is extremely insufficient. In the absence of cities, buying and selling was of course done in small bazars or periodical *hats* which are a regular feature of the Indian countryside even to-day. Barter was the main form of exchange, with the cow serving as the standard of value. Another recognised means of exchange was the gold necklace known as *Nishka* but the view of some scholars that it denoted a coin as early as the days of the Rigveda is ill-founded and has not found general acceptance. A measure of weight called *Mana* is mentioned and it is believed by some that *Urdara* was a particular measure used for weighing grains.

On the question whether the Rigvedic Aryans had any international trade relations judgment must be suspended. It is a moot point if they had reached the sea though the word *samudra* does occur in the Veda. There is an allusion to a great shipwreck of which the victim is said to have been rescued by the Asvins with a ship of a hundred oars (*sataritra*) but scholars are undecided whether this happened in the open sea or on the broad waters of the inland Indus. The currency of the *Mana* measure has been taken by some as indicating relations with Babylonia and words like 'Parsu' and 'Parthava' as pointing to contact with Persia and Parthia. But much more definite evidence must be forthcoming before this may he accepted as a fact.

The political organisation of the Aryans was tribal in form and spirit. The tribe (*jana*) constituted the state (*rashtra*) and was ruled by a chief called *raja* . It is not definitely known if the sub-divisions of the tribe already named, viz., *vis* and *grama*, also constituted territorial units of government, but the balance of probability seems to be that they did. In a special sense, *vis* indicated the entire people of the state and the head of the state was sometimes called *visampati* or lord of the people. The leader of the *grama* was known as *gramani* (evidently the precursor of the later *gramika* or *gramabhoja*) and was usually a Vaisya. The basic unit of the state was the family (*kula* or *griha*) functioning under the guidance and authority of the master (*kulapa* or *grihapati*). The head of the family wielded considerable power in the house and probably even possessed the right of inflicting a drastic penalty like blinding on its inmates.

The *raja* of the tribal state was normally a hereditary dignitary, though occasionally we do hear of the election of the king by the people, *vis*. In the latter case, the choice was in all probability restricted to the members of the ruling family and the nobility and was not open to the common tribesmen. One of the hymns[20] speaks of 'kings' sitting down in assembly which probably suggests that in some of the states the form of government was oligarchical and the supreme power was enjoyed by a central committee of aristocratic members all of whom bore the title *raja*. The mention of *gana* in the Rigveda also seems to bear out this conclusion for in subsequent times *gana* certainly denoted an oligarchical and aristocratic consitution.[21]

The main function of the *raja* was to protect the lives and property of the people and to lead them to victory in war. In return, he received a contribution (*bali*) from the subjects—whether in the form of a voluntary offering or a compulsory tax, it is difficult to say. There was no special sanctity attached to his office nor was he regarded as the religious head of the community. But still the eminence of his position in the tribe was unmistakable. His installation in power was marked by a formal ceremony (*abhisheka*) and he lived in a spacious house much superior to the dwellings of the common people. Already an embryonic court consisting of courtiers (*sabhasads*) was forming about him. The augmentation

of the orbit of his authority by conquest led to a considerable increase in his splendour and pomp.

The power of the *raja* was greatly circumscribed by the ancient usage of the tribes. The tribal councils known as *Sabha* and *Samiti*, political bodies of very old standing, played a vital role in the government and applied an effective curb to the autocratic leanings of the king. Unfortunately the constitution of these assemblies is not described at length anywhere and the distinction between them also is not wholly clear. It is generally believed that the *Samiti* was a popular assembly including not only the common people (*visah*) but also the Brahmanas and the rich patrons and princes (*maghavan*) and met in session to carry out the political business of the tribe. The *Sabha*, less political in character, was a more select body of aristocrats, wealthy persons and Brahmanas functioning rather as a Council of Elders than an assembly of the whole tribe and its members were probably called *sabheya* (worthy of the *Sabha*).[22] The legal powers vested in the assemblies cannot be exactly defined, but the frequent references to them in the Rigveda leave no doubt that they were not mere ornamental adjuncts of the state, allowed to exist in deference to a vague tribal feeling, but real effective limbs of the government wielding substantial authority. On their ratification depended the accession of the *raja* and great emphasis was laid on harmonious relations among their members.[23] The political assemblies of the later times controlled the activities of the king and his officers to a much lesser extent than these tribal councils or assemblies of the Rigvedic period.

The simple administrative needs and the limited economic resources of the tribes permitted only a rudimentary official hierarchy to function under the king. The only known official designations of the period are *gramani* (chief of the sept), *senani* (commander of the troops), *purohita* (chief priest), *duta* (envoy or messenger), and *spasa* (spy). Still less can be gleaned from the Rigveda about the judicial practice of the early Aryans in India. Though there is no clear evidence of it in the Veda, it is generally supposed that the *raja* administered justice with the assistance of the *purohita* and other legal advisers as in the later days. According to some

scholars, the system of trial by ordeal was in vogue but this is doubtful.

The Rigveda mentions *sena* (army) but it appears that it was a levy of the fighting people of the community in times of war or raid rather than a regular standing force for which an effective need could hardly have been felt as early as this. It was led by persons of the Rajanya class and, next to the king himself, its command was vested in the *senani* or the general. While the common people constituted the infantry, warriors of the higher classes usually fought from chariots thus earning for themselves the epithet *rathin* (chariot-user). The chief weapons of offence were the bow, spear, lance, sword, axe and the stone sling. The defensive equipment included a coat of mails (*varma*) and a metal helmet (*sipra*). Elephants were as yet not used in war and the *sena* probably lacked a cavalry also though 'prancing horses' are referred to in certain battle hymns. The soldiers marched into battle to the accompaniment of drums (*dundubhi*) and war cries. The *purohita* was present on the battle-field by the side of the king and prayed for the victory of his people.

Like the Harappans whom they suppressed, the Rigvedic Aryans were a gay and joyous people not given overmuch to the thought of death or the life beyond. Intheir healthy love of life and its pleasures they very much resembled their cousins, the Greeks. Great meat-eaters to the last man, they had also a preference for vegetables, fruits and milk and its various preparations. They did not share the average modern Indian's abhorrence of liquor and had at least two kinds of intoxicating drinks, *Soma* and *Sura*, the former of which was eventually promoted to the dignity of a god. Fond of gay and coloured garments, they had a partiality for ornaments and flowers. There was much singing and dancing among them accompanied by the lute (*vina*), cymbals, drums (*dundubhi*) and possibly flute (*vana*). Their musical instruments were probably constructed according to the heptatonic scale which is the basis of modern Indian music. They were keen sportsmen and hunted tigers, elephants, wild boars, buffaloes, deer and birds. The love of gambling seems to have been widespread among them and a celebrated hymn of the Rigveda describes how the life of a

gambler was ruined by his addiction to the game. There were doubtless many festive gatherings which the women also attended 'decked shining forth with sunbeams' but no knowledge of these has survived. A special attraction was the chariot-race which evoked great enthusiasm among the lovers of sport and was the remote ancestor of the cart races of many Indian villages to-day.

However free and full of abandon the Aryan tribsemen may have been at the social gatherings, within the families they led a sober and disciplined life and earnestly abided by the schedule of their allocated work. The joint family was the rule among them and the same house accommodated the master (*grihapati*), his wife or wives, their children, the wives and children of the latter and also whatever male or famale slaves (*dasa* or *dasi*) there were. Women wielded great authority in the households directing the servants and slaves and participating with their husbands in all the religious ceremonies. There were no restrictions on the freedom of their movements and the *purdah* system of the later times was altogether unknown. The ladies of the house chatted freely with the guests, took their meals in common with them, went to festive gatherings and even took part in the assemblies of the tribe. Society being patrilineal, male progeny was desired but this did not result in harsh or unkind treatment to daughters. The education of women was not neglected and some of them *e. g.* Visvavara, Ghosha and Apala, are actually known to have acquired the position of *rishis* by composing hymns.

As in most tribal societies, girls had a large say in the matter of marriage and their choice was generally approved by the parents. Monogamy was the rule, but polygamy was not unknown though it must necessarily have been confined to the upper classes. Polyandry and incestuous marriages (involving the union of brothers and sisters or parents and children) were not permitted; otherwise there were hardly any restrictions on marriage.

'The Rigvedic Aryans esteemed honesty, justice and liberality and strong was their sense of chivalric honour.' They had already developed the concepts of *rita* (Cosmic as well as Moral Order) and its opposite, *anrita*, *agas*, or *enas*. The guardians of *rita* were Varuna and, to a lesser extent, the other gods connected with

the Sun whose unfailing eye searches every nook and corner of the universe. In the Veda hospitality to acquaintances and strangers, benevolence to friends and fellow beings, truth, self-restraint and similar virtues are repeatedly emphasized and sorcery, witch-craft, adultery, gambling etc. are branded as criminal. Prayers are addressed to gods to inflict misfortune on robbers, thieves, liars and the like. 'He that eats by himself', says the Rigveda, 'will keep his sin to himself.'

The religious notions of the Aryans were already fixed in their essentials before the immigrations into India and centred round the worship of gods through the ritual of prayer and sacrifice. The prayers consisted of beautiful hymns (*mantra*) in praise of various deities and were chanted with or without sarcrifices. There was no stereotyped, canonical code of prayers. New hymns were being constantly produced and the poets who composed them were frequently raised to the status of *rishis.*

In the religion of the Rigveda there is a preponderating materialistic element. The purpose of the prayers and sacrifices was mainly to please the gods in order to get 'boons' from them in the shape of male progeny, riches, cattle, freedom from ailments, victory in war and every other conceivable mode of material welfare. "The relationship of the Aryan peoples to their gods is that of frank expectation of favour if the right sacrifices are performed and correct words are chanted, and Keith rather cynically pictures the priest saying unashamed to Indra 'We have our-wishes, you have the gifts ; here we are with our songs' and expecting that the 'God will see that the exchange is fair".[24] The time had not yet arrived when the target of religious activity would be something supposedly higher than gross earthly weal.

Many of the sacrifices belonged to the class of domestic ritual and were of a simple nature. The house-holder himself, assisted by his wife, performed the rite at the altar (which was the single fire of the domestic hearth) by throwing oblations of ordinary food and drink, milk, grain, ghee etc. into it. Such ceremonies were performed on occasions like birth, marriage, funeral, ancestor-worship, ploughing and driving the cattle to pastures and there are many hymns in the Rigveda appropriate to these.

But there were more elaborate sacrifices also which could be celebrated only by the rich and influential people and involved the services of numerous priests and menials. These gradually came to be known as *Srauta* sacrifices. On such occasions the sacrificer (*yajamana*) himself did very little beyond providing the necessary material and fees and the various details of the sacrificial act were attended to by hired priests. Animal sacrifices were an important feature of the Rigvedic religion and are indicated by the *apri-suktas*. The animals sacrificed included bulls, buffaloes goats, rams and even cows.[25]

The gods who received the oblations and prayers were many and of diverse natures. In the main, however, they may be described as *deified personifications of the aspects and forces of Nature.* "In many cases the physical basis of their character can be clearly seen but in others it has been completely overlaid and obscured by the imagination of the bards." Most of them are male in accordance with the patrilineal composition of the Aryan society; female deities like Ushas, Prithivi and Aditi are few and comparatively unimportant. The common characteristics of the gods include a shining complexion (from which the word *Deva*, lit. shining one), immortality, power and a kind, just disposition.[26] The largest number of hymns (about 1/4 of the entire collec tion) were composed in honour of Indra, the war-and-weather god, slayer of the dragon Vritra, 'a famous eater of beef and a champion drinker of Soma.' The importance of Indra can be well understood if we remember that warfare with the Dasyus occupied a good deal of the Vedic Aryans' lives. Among the other important deities of the Rigveda mention may be made of Varuna, the Master of the Cosmic and Moral Order, Agni, Mitra, Savitri, Marut, Parjanya, Ushas, Surya, and the Asvins. A special type of god was Soma or Somapavamana, 'the deified spiritual liquid', to whose praise a whole *mandala* of the Rigveda is devoted. Dyaus or Dyaus-pitar (Zeus of the Greeks and Jupiter of the Romans) who had been the High God of the Indo-Europeans seems to have lost his importance by the time of the Rigveda and there are only a few hymns addressed to him. Though some gods figure more prominently

than the others in the Rigveda it must not be supposed that there was any kind of gradation or order of precedence among them. Strictly speaking, the term pantheon, implying a scheme of precedence, is inapplicable to the Rigvedic host of deities. 'The poets were almost equally impressed by the majesty of all their gods and attributed pre-eminence to whomsoever god they happened to be eulogizing in a particular song.'[27] The gods are traditionally classified as (*a*) terrestrial, *e. g.*, Prithivi, Soma, Agni (*b*) atmospheric, *e. g.*, Indra, Marut, Vayu and (*c*) heavenly, *e. g.*, Dyaus, Varuna, Savitri, Surya etc. A high imaginative quality is displayed in the conception of such abstract deities as *Sraddha* (Faith) and *Manyu* (Anger), claiming a few hymns in the tenth *mandala*.

The Rigvedic seers possessed not only a spirit of veneration but also a questioning mind which strove to penetrate the mystery of the universe and thus laid the foundations of Indian philosophy in the historical period. Asl to the early Greek philosophers, the question that appeared most important to them was the one connected with the origin of the universe. According to one school of seers, the visible world has sprung from *Tapas* (Warmth) which is the ultimate principle of the universe through the intermediation of the Year (*Samvatsara*) symbolising Time. Another set of thinkers held Water to be the primordial element[28] and yet others traced the beginning of the universe to the Sun propelled by its own motive force, *Svadha*.[29]The concepts of *Hiranyagarbha*, the Golden Egg, and *Visvakarma* (Greator-God) were also developed. Towards the end of the period, the polytheism of the Veda itself began to be subjected to examination and a strong monotheistic tendency arose in the realm of thought. Advanced thinkers began to hold the view that the 'gods are one and the same; only the sages describe them differently.'

Saturated with the joys of life the Rigvedic Aryans seldom tried to extend their vision to the obscure region beyond death. They usually pictured the dead as travelling to the 'Abode of the Fathers', ruled by Yama, and reposing there in tranquillity and bliss. Some hymns, however, carry a reference to Varuna's retributive justice in consigning the wrong-doers to the 'House of Clay', evidently the embryonic hell of the Hindus. The funeral practice of the Aryans probab-

ly included both inhumation and cremation in the beginning, but the former was gradually replaced by the latter.

Opinion is divided if the *rishis* of the Rigveda were acquainted with the art of writing, there being no clear mention of it in the text. But there can be no doubt that some of them possessed poetical talents of a very high order. The vivid imagination, majestic conception and rhythmic quality characterising many hymns of the Veda stamp them as superb pieces of literary art. The hymns addressed to Ushas (Dawn) are particularly striking on account of their noble picturisation and linguistic grace. On the whole, the poems of the Rigveda are not just crude folksongs but records of real inspiration couched in a consciously literary language and elaborate metres by highly imaginative persons who had imbibed a profound love of nature. In fact they constitute one of the few sophisticated features presented by the simple life of the Aryans still ordered largely by its vigorous tribal inheritance.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. It is now a matter of common knowledge that Sanskrit, the liturgical language of India, which was imported by the Aryans, has remarkable affinities with some of the principal languages of Europe such as Greek, Latin, Gothic, Celtic and Slavonic and the language of the ancient Persians as revealed in the Gathas and the later sacred books. It is also certain that this close resemblance in vocabulary and grammar is due to descent from a parent language-form which must have been prevalent in a geographically unified area at an early time. The speakers of this original 'Indo-European' tongue (with its dialectical variations) eventually spread from their common homeland to Europe on the one hand and India on the other to become the ancestors of the modern Greeks, Romans, English, Dutch, Scandinavians, German, French, Russians, Bulgarians, Iranians, and Indians. The location of the early habitat or 'cradle' of the Indo-European peoples has been the subject of a long and keen controversy which is still far from settled. "The scene of the undivided Aryans' life' says Prof. Gordon Childe, 'was a continental region traversed by rivers, sufficiently wooded to afford shelter to bears and beavers but open enough to nourish hares and swift horses and to permit the unimpeded progress of vehicles.' The principal locations proposed, with all of which the above description is in agreement, are : Central Asia (Max Muller), Bactria (Rhodes), Central and Western Germany (Geiger), Austria, Hungary and Bohemia (Giles), North

Europe (Penka) and South Russia (Meyers, Peake and Gordon Childe). A few Indian scholars favour the claims of the country of Saptasindhava (the Punjab and the adjoinng area) while Mr. B. G. Tilak has tried to adduce support for his Arctic origin theory. A detailed discussion of this complicated question is outside the scope of this work. As stated above, the most reasonable hypothesis which seems to fit in best with both archaeological and philological data is that of Meyer, Peake, Gordon Childe and others. For a full exposition of this view, see Childe, The Aryans, p. 183-ff. Some idea of the great affinity of the 'Indo-European' languages may be gained from the following equations :

Sanskrit pitri = Latin pater = Greek pater = English father = German vater ; Sanskrit matri = Latin mater = Greek mater = English mother = German mutter ; Sanskrit asmi (am) = Latin sum = Irish am = Gothic im = Lithuanian esmi ; Sanskrit deva = Latin deus = Celtic dia = Teutonic tivar = Lithuanian diewas ; Sanskrit duhitar = Teutonic dauhtar = Lithuanian duhte ; Sanskrit bhratar = Latin frater = Celtic brathir ; Sanskrit vidhava = Latin vidua = Celtic fedb.

2. The ascertainable and probable details of the primitive culture of the Indo-Europeans have been summed up by Childe (The Aryans, p. 78 ff). According to him, the Aryan family was patrilineal and patriarchal and included several generations living under the rule of the eldest male member as 'house-father.' The undivided Aryans worshipped personified celestial beings, daevos, among whom Dyeus pater, the Sky-Father, occupied the highest place. They possessed domestic animals like dogs, sheep and horses and cattle played an important part in their economy. They were nomadic by habits but their nomadism was 'not of the extreme type of the Mongols of upper Asia' and some sort of cultivation was practised by them. They knew the use of at least one meatal—ayas—and were also acquainted with the art of producing pottery. They were probably in direct or indirect contact with the civilised world of Mesopotamia and their words for ox, steer, star and axe were borrowed from there.

3. With the possible exception of some clay-balls which seem to have been missiles to be hurled from catapults.

4. It may, however, be noted that in one of the hymns a worshipper invokes the god Indra from his pratna okas or ancient abode. There is also a reference to the Yadus and Turvasas being brought by indra from a distant land (A. H. I, I, p. 25).

5. It was Max Muller who made the first critical attempt to formulate a chronology of the Vedic literature. Starting with the accepted fact that some of the Upanishads are older than the Buddha (c. 500 B. C.), he assigned a minimum period of 200 years to the development of the various stages of the Vedic literature (i.e., Samhita, Brahmana, Aranyaka and Upanishad), and so arrived at the period c. 1200-1000 B. C. for the composition of the Rigveda. In spite of the mechanical nature of his calculations he was substantially right. The too high dates for the Veda, such as those proposed by Jacobi, Tilak and even Bhandarkar, must now be given up in view of

the revised chronology of the Indus Valley culture. It has been pointed out that the language of the Rigveda is quite close to that of the Avestan gathas and a comparison of the latter with the old Persian inscriptions of the Achaemenian emperors of Persia (6th-5th Cen. B. C.) shows that they cannot be much earlier than c. 1000 B. C.

6. King Sudas of the Bharata-Tritsus is said to have defeated a confederacy of non-Aryan tribes headed by King Bheda on the Jamuna. The Jamuna is mentioned only thrice and the Ganges only once in the Rigveda.

7. The non-mention of the tiger and rice in the Rigveda has been taken by some to show that the Aryans had not advanced much beyond the Gangetic Doab and had certainly not reached Bengal. Such omissions, however, should be treated with due caution. The representations on the Indus seals suggest that the tiger was well known in the Indus valley at the time of the Aryan invasions.

8. e.g., the confederacy headed by Bheda, referred to above.

9. Some of the tribes which sided with the Purus in the 'Battle of Ten Kings' were probably non-Aryan. The Vrichivants who 'broke the sacrificial vessels' and were allies of the Turvasas are also regarded as non-Aryans by many.

10. Cf. the case of kings Balvutha and Taruksha.

11. Viz. Alina, Paktha, Bhalanas, Siva and Vishanin.

12. Basham, The Wonder That Was India, p. 35.

13. N. K. Dutt, Origin and Growth of Caste in India, p. 67.

14. Though the domestic ritual was quite simple, the grand sacrifices were already fairly elaborate. See Keith, Religion and Philosophy of the Veda, pp. 290-1. It has been doubted by some if priesthood had emerged even as a distinct profession in the Rigvedic age. But such hymns as IX, 121 should be sufficient to olear all uncertainty on the point. 'Various are the thoughts and endeavours of us different men. The carpenter seeks something broken, the physician a patient, the Brahmana some one to offer sacrifice.'

15. Among the early Iranians there were four classes viz , Atharva, Rathaestra, Vastriya Fshouyant and Huiti. The functions of these were similar to those of the Indian Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. Cf. also the milites, flamines and quirites of the Roman society and equites, druides and plebes of the early Celts of Gaul.

16. Dutt, p. 69.

17. Ibid p. 60.

18. As at present, irrigation may have been done with water drawn from wells and carried to the fields by small channels.

19. Basham, p. 37. Iron had been only recently discovered in Asia Minor where the Hittite kings made every effort to keep it a secret.

20. RV X, 97, 6.

21. An Advanced History of India, p. 29.
22. The Vedic Age, p. 353.
23. 'Assemble, speak together, let your minds be all of one accord. The place is common, common the assembly, common the mind, so be your thoughts united, A common purpose do I lay before you. One and the same be your resolve, and be your minds of one accord. United be the thoughts of all that all may happily agree. Thus runs the concluding hymn of the Rigveda.
24. Prehistoric India, p. 283.
25. The great value of the cow in the agricultural economy was being gradually realised and in some quarters she had already begun to be described as 'aghnya' or inviolable. But still she was not infrequently slaughtered for sacrifice or even for meat.
26. Accordingly the Rigvedic religion is sometimes called Henotheism or Kathenotheism.
27. RV, X, 190.
28. RV, X, 72.
29. RV, I, 160, 6, V 4, 13.
30. RV, I, 164, 46.
31. RV, VII, 89.
32. The evidence for burial occurs in only one hymn (X, 18). It is argued by some that the reference here may be to the burial of the post-cremation ashes and not to actual inhumation. But, as pointed out by Winternitz, (A History of Indian Literature, Vol, I, p. 96) the words 'Heave thyself, Earth, nor press thee downward heavily, afford him every access, gently tending him' can mean only the burial of the dead body in the soil. There is also reference in the hymn to a 'barrier erected here for the living' and to standing posts erected in connection with the ceremonies. This practice was probably reminiscent of the setting up of ritual timber post circles round tumuli in Bronze Age Europe and may have been connected with the cult of stupas in India (Piggot, Prehistoric India, p. 285).

CHAPTER V

The Later Vedic Age

A. THE ARYANISATION OF NORTH INDIA

The religious texts of India whose composition followed that of the Rigveda, *viz.*, the Samhitas of the Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads, constitute the Later Veda[1]. The period represented by these texts extends roughly from c. 1000 to c. 600 B. C. and, for want of a better name, is often described as the Later Vedic age. In more than one sense it was the most formative period of India's history and culture, but for our knowledge of it we have to depend almost exclusively on the above named texts, there being little by way of extra-literary evidence. It seems certain that much archaeological material throwing light on the various aspects of the period lies hidden underneath the surface of the earth in the different regions of North India, specially in the Ganges basin, but the excavator's spade is yet to reach it.

The most important development of the time was the expansion of the Aryan power to the east and south into the heart of India. The Jamuna and the Ganges no longer constituted the eastern limit of the Aryan settlements as in age of the Rigveda. Bands of Aryan warriors left their homes in the Punjab and moved gradually in an eastwardly and southwardly direction until they had founded settlements practically over the whole of North India and had even crossed the Vindhyas at some points. The tribe of the Kosalas, probably led by the Ikshvakus, moved accross the Ganges and colonised the country of modern Oudh to which it gave its name. The Kasis settled in the Banaras region and probably founded the great town which is still known after them. A little later the northern part of Bihar also passed into the orbit of Aryan authority and a beautiful legend in the Satapatha Brahmana relates how, at the bidding of Agni, Mathava Videgha carried it (i.e. Agni) accross the Sadanira (the present Gandak or Rapti)—evidently an allegorical allusion

to the spread of Aryan culture to North Bihar and the foundation of an Aryan kingdom (Videha) there. To the south of Videha was the region of Magadha and to the east of the latter lay the land known as Anga. Both of these are mentioned in the Later Vedic literature but it appears that they had not yet been completely Aryanised though Aryan influence was gradually gaining ground there and already there was a strong mixed element in the cultural and racial *milieu* of the regions. Further beyond, Aryan cultural and political influence had not penetrated to the eastern extremity of the country and Bengal and Assam were completely in the hands of non-Aryans. Scattered references in the texts enable us to form some idea of the southward movement of the Aryans also. One of the tribes, that of the Matsyas, settled in the Jaipur tract while the Salvas seem to have taken up their abode in the region of the modern Alwar State. The Vitihotras colonised Malwa and the Vidarbhas formed a kingdom in Berar or Southern C. P. Later in the period a branch of the Yadavas probably passed on to Kathiawar and a section of the Satvatas, ruled by the Bhoja kings, proceeded beyond the Vindhyas to settle in a part of N. W. Deccan. By the end of the Later Vedic period, the political Aryanisation of North India was thus almost complete and a definite step forward in the advance into S. India had also been taken. The Vindhyas, unknown to the Rigveda, are mentioned in the Later Vedic works.

While the Rigveda abounds in allusions to warfare with the Dasyus, the Later Vedic texts contain very few references of this type. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the colonisation of the Ganges and Narmada valleys by the advancing Aryans was more in the nature of a peaceful expansion than violent conquest. The earlier inhabitants of these regions were obviously not in a position to offer a substantial resistance to the Aryan fighters moving across their lands. Though possessing a culture of their own, they were probably more deficient in military organisation and resources than even their brethren of the north-west. Those who crossed the Jamuna and the Ganges about the beginning of the first millennium B. C. apparently did not have to

pray as hard for the favour of Indra as those who crossed the Suleiman about five centuries earlier.

Early in this period, the Bharatas and the Purus, who had been great rivals during the age of the Rigveda, merged into each other to form a new political and social unit, the Kurus, who for a long time occupied the premier position in the country. A similar amalgamation of the Rigvedic Krivis with some other tribes (possibly the Druhyus, Yadus, Anus and Turvasas) led to the formation of the Panchalas, the eastern neighbours of the Kurus and likewise a very important power of the period. Such tribal weldings were doubtless taking place in the other parts also with the result that there soon could be seen in many regions of the country, kingdoms bigger and more powerful than those of the Rigvedic times. The process of the formation of large states was accelerated by military conquest as well. A perusal of the evidence makes it clear that wars of ambition and aggrandisement were of frequent occurrence in the Aryan fold during the period of the Later Veda. Many capable and aspiring kings of the time harboured imperial ambition and, swayed by the desire to acquire 'universal sovereignty', are said to have undertaken extensive campaigns of conquest. To symbolise the high position thus gained, they performed elaborate sacrifices like Vajapeya, Rajasuya and Asvamedha and assumed grandiloquent titles like *Sarvabhauma*, *Samrat*, *Ekarat* and *Adhiraja*. The texts of the period name a large number of kings[2] who 'being consecrated with the *Mahabhisheka* ceremony went everywhere, conquering the earth upto its end, and sacrificed the horse'. The stories of the 'conquest of the earth' by these rulers and the acquisition of the true imperial status by them may well be regarded with scepticism.[3] They were probably great only by comparison with their lesser contemporaries but there can be no doubt that they were not mere tribal chieftains like the Rigvedic kings but powerful heads of big and flourishing states with considerable military and economic resources at their command. The energy and resourcefulness of such rulers placed their kingdoms in the forefront of politics but in most cases their glory was soon eclipsed by the rise of other luminaries on the political horizon. Specially notable of such

kingdoms which rose and fell in importance during the Later Vedic period are those of Kuru, Panchala, Kasi, Kosala and Videha.[4]

No systematic account of the vicissitudes of even these kingdoms during the period is possible. The texts furnish the names of some noteworthy kings like Para Atnar of Kosala, Parikshit and Janamejaya of Kuru, Sona Satrasaha of Panchala and Dhritarashtra of Kasi who were well-known conquerors or of Pravahana Jaivali of Panchala, Janaka of Videha and Ajatasatru of Kasi who were more famous for their learning and intellectual attainments than for their political achievements. But they afford us little assistance in weaving together the scattered references to the political happenings of the time into anything like a connected narrative. Despite the laudable attempts of Pargiter and Raychaudhuri, we have still to wait for the day when a regular history of the Later Vedic period, commanding general support among scholars, will be available to us. Meanwhile we must remain content with the very general statement that the above named kingdoms dominated the political scene during the early centuries of the second millennium B. C. Towards the end of this period the power of the Kurus began to decline. Tradition says that their kingdom was afflicted with hailstorms, locusts and other natural calamities and soon their capital, Hastinapura, itself was washed away by the flood of the Ganges. By c. 600 B. C. they had lost their pre-eminence. A similar fate befell their allies, the Panchalas. The kingdom of the latter was probably split up into two parts, a northern and a southern one, and sank down to a position of comparative insignificance. About the same time the kingdom of Videha passed out of existence due to a variety of causes of which the tyrannical policy of some of its later rulers and the hostile attitude of Kasi were probably the most important, and, in its place was founded the republic of the Vajjis of Vaisali which played a significant role in the history of the ensuing period. The two remaining kingdoms, Kosala and Kasi, proved more fortunate than the rest and were still on the upgrade when the Later Vedic period drew to a close. The end of the seventh and the beginning of the sixth century found them engaged in an

earnest struggle for supremacy in the upper part of the Gangetic valley.

Against the extremely fluid chronological background of the Later Vedic age, we must place the most important event of the traditional history of India, viz., the Great War (*Mahabharata*) of Kurukshetra which was regarded as marking the termination of one epoch and the beginning of another. The story of the war as narrated in the great epic of India centres round the strife of the Kurus and the Pandus which is represented to have developed into a comprehensive struggle affecting the fortunes of many chiefs from the different parts of India. It is a pity that the epic is so full of later accretions that the real historical event is more or less completely obscured but it seems certian that an important war did take place in which the Kurus were involved and which created a considerable stir in the country. The identity of the Pandus, the chief rivals of the Kurus in the fray, is not clear. Tradition makes them kinsmen of the Kurus but the view has also been advanced that they were a Mongoloid people who came across the Central Himalayas to invade the Kuru dominions at this time. Centuries later their descendants were still to be found in the north-western part of the country where they are known to have waged war on a king of Gandhara. The date of the Great War is extremely uncertain. Traditionally it is placed in 3102 B. C. which is out of question. Another date suggested is C. 1400 B. C. This must also be wide of the mark as we have seen that the Kurus did not exist as a power in the Rigvedic period which began about this time. A third date proposed, C. 1000-900 B. C., seems to be more in accord with our knowledge of the early Aryans in India. The war probably took place early in the Later Vedic period before the eastern Aryan states of Kosala and Videha had risen into prominence, though tradition makes it later than some of the great heroes and chiefs of these kingdoms.

There seems a fair agreement among historians that the Mahabharata gives a garbled version of a real historical incident. But there is not the same unanimity about the historical character of the Ramayana, the second great epic of India. Many writers on the subject are inclined to dismiss it as an allegorical or

mythological poem without a basis in fact. It has been held that Sita, its heroine, is really the personification of the furrow-goddess while Rama, its hero, stands for Indra, and the conflict with Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, may be traced back to the old Indra-Vritra myth of the Rigveda. A second view regards the story as an attempt to preserve, through the introduction of imaginary characters, the memory of the first venture of the Aryans into the south. Competent authorities have also contended that the 'Rama legend looks like a blend of three distinct stories without any historicity put together at different times'. Indian scholars in general are inclined to discredit such scepticism and regard the story as possessing a nucleus of truth. It is impossible at present to say anything definite on the point. The fact that neiher Rama nor his father Dasaratha finds mention in any of the Vedic texts may not be regarded as an insuperable argument against the historicity of the two chiefs, but it is really difficult to disentangle the kernel of fact, if any, in such details of the story as the hero's venture into the south, his wars and alliances with non-Aryans there and his connection with the kingdom of Videha. In fact it is not even definite whether Rama was a king of Ayodhya or of Banaras for the earliest version of the story that we have represents him as a ruler of the latter kingdom. In any case, the chronological setting of the story, *i.e.*, of that part of it which may be taken to have actually occurred, like that of the Mahabharata, lies in the period of the Later Veda. If there was an Epic or Heroic Age in the history of India, it was the Later Vedic Age.

Round the rise and fall of the above mentioned kingdoms centres the main interest of the political history of the Later Vedic period. But alongside of these, there existed in the different parts of the country a number of other principalities few of which played any conspicuous role in the politics of the age and many of which were not infrequently forced to pay allegiance to one or other of the bigger states. Among these mention may be made of Gandhara (on both banks of the Indus), Kekaya (also in the north-west), Madra (the territory round Sialkot in Central Punjab), Haihaya (probably in the Narmada valley), Matsya (comprising parts of Alwar, Jaipur and Bharatpur), Magadha (South Bihar)

and Kalinga (Orissa). Political India thus displayed a spectacle of fragmentation and the day of real unity was still very far off.

B. CIVILISATION IN THE LATER VEDIC AGE

The Later Vedic works introduce us to a society displaying a considerable advance over the simple days of the Rigveda. While there had been only villages in the Rigvedic period, there is tangible evidence that a few towns had now sprung into existence and the urban factor, though still not prominent, was again making headway after half a millennium of severe setback. The texts of the period mention Asandivat and Kampilya, the capitals of Kurus and Panchalas respectively, and there is reference to Kausambi and Kasi. Ayodhya and Mithila were also doubtless flourishing cities of the age, but they are not mentioned in contemporary literature. Under the conditions of settled life in India, the old tribal structure of the Aryans had started breaking up and political organisation was gradually acquiring a territorial basis. The consciousness of distinction between Aryan and non-Aryan was fast dwindling. Though a faint divergence is still discernible in some passages, such as in the prayers uttered for the glory of Arya and Sudra, there are clear indications that the peoples of the country, all of them rooted alike in the soil now, were developing a common outlook and an increasing sense of being co-sharers in a common civilisation. The strongest proof of this is furnished, as we shall see, by the religious developments of the time as reflected in the Later Vedic texts.

Agriculture formed the main occupation of the people, as ever afterwards, but *yava* or *dhanya* was not the only grain cultivated now. A large range of crops, including rice (*vrihi*), wheat (*godhuma*) and sesamum, were sown and reaped in the proper seasons and the value of animal manures (*purisha*, *sakrit*) for fertilising the fields was fully understood. Larger and heavier ploughs than those of the Rigvedic age were used and better irrigation facilities were provided. Greater specialisation than in the Rigvedic age marked the development of industry during this period. While the Rigveda names only a few professions, a number of these are

mentioned in the Later Vedic works such as those of potters, carpenters, jewellers, leather-workers, basket-makers, dyers, brewers, rope-makers and weavers The smiths had a more extensive knowledge of metals than their brethren of the earlier epoch and,in addition to gold and *ayas*, we hear also of silver (*rajata*), tin (*trapu*), and lead (*sisa*). What is more important, *ayas* is now described both as *lohita* (red) and *syama* (black), the latter of which can only mean iron. The Indian Bronze Age was thus formally over and the country had entered the Age of Iron[5].

Trade and commerce had made some progress. As pointed out by Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri, the very establishment of cities presupposes a developed trade and the growth of a middle class living by exchange of commodities, though it was only in the subsequent period that the full effect of this development was felt. The Later Vedic Indians were definitely acquainted with the sea and understood navigation. They presumably carried on a certain amount of sea-borne trade but there is no direct evidence of this. Coined money was perhaps yet to appear. There are references in the texts to more than one unit of value, besides the cow which was gradually going out of vogue as a means of exchange. Thus *Nishka*, originally denoting a garland, now appears as a lump of gold with a definite weight. *Satamana* and *Krishnala* also seem to have been pieces of gold having specific weights. All these were rather bullion than coins and there is nothing in the literature of the period which may be interpreted as an indubitable reference to actual coinage. The standardised weights, however, show that India was on the verge of having a currency of her own.

The change which had come over the Aryan world profoundly affected its polity. With the increase in the dimensions of kingdoms, there was a corresponding growth of the power and importance of kings. The Later Vedic *rajan* was no longer the tribal chieftain of old, but a monarch in the true sense of the term, ruling over a territorial state with high pretensions and greater effective authority than was enjoyed by his predecessor of the Rigvedic age. As already pointed out, kings of this period not infrequently made war on their contemporaries for the

establishment of sovereignty and assumed high-sounding titles like *Sarvabhauma*, *Samrat* and *Adhiraja* to emphasize their majesty. The rite of consecration (*Rajasuya*) by which they were formally installed on the throne was now a much more impressive affair than it had been formerly and a large retinue and official class served them. They were sometimes deemed to possess the right of 'expelling even a Brahmana at will.' Theorists had begun to claim for them exemption from punishment[5a] and even the theory of the Divine Origin of Kingship was raising its head. We find some of the texts describing the kings as 'the visible representatives of Prajapati.'

The autocracy of the king was, however, still far from complete. With the very doubtful exception of the Maurya period, India never conferred on her rulers, at least in theory, the right of ownership to land which was always regarded as the possession of the individual tillers. Wicked and unscrupulous rulers were sometimes driven out by the people (*e.g.* the case of king Dushtartu Paumsayana who was expelled by the Srinjayas in spite of his ten generations of royal descent) and the numerous hymns in the *Samhitas* and the *Brahmanas* meant for the recall of exiled kings show that such depositions were not rare. Though kingship was normally hereditary, cases of election of kings by the people are also recorded.[6] The old tribal assemblies, the *Sabha* and the *Samiti*, still played an important role in the political life of the community and served as an effective check on the power of the kings. In the sacred texts they are sometimes described as 'the two daughters of Prajapati, *i.e.* august bodies of divine origin, and we find kings praying for their goodwill. But it is important to note that the references to them are much less frequent in the Later Vedic literature than in the Rigveda suggesting that they had probably ceased to meet as often as they did in the Rigvedic time. 'The expansion of the territorial limits of the kingdoms must have diminished the possibility of the frequent meetings of the assemblies and to that extent reduced their control over the government.'[7] Kings doubtless took advantage of this and appropriated to themselves many powers formerly enjoyed by the assemblies.

The administrative machinery of the Later Vedic period was naturally more elaborate than that of the Rigvedic states. The official designations of quite a few functionaries are known though in most cases it is impossible to form an exact idea of their duties and powers. For the first time we now hear of *sachivas* (ministers or high executives) and officers known as *sthapati* and *satapati* are also mentioned. The *sthapatis* obviously wielded considerable authority and influence as one of them is known to have been instrumental in restoring an exiled king to the throne.[8] Among other important officers of the state, mention may be made of the *purohita* (royal priest), *suta* (charioteer) *gramani* (headman of village or sept), *kshattri* (chamberlain) and *samgrahitri* (probably treasurer) According to one source, these constituted, along with the king's queen, brother and son, the category of the 'Eight Heroes' (*Viras*) *i.e.* chief defenders or upholders of the regime. The names of all these also figure in the list of the *ratnins* (lit-jewel-holders) who were evidently the most important dignitaries of the realm and were sometimes called *rajakartri* or king-makers. Among the others enjoying the status of *ratnin* were *rajanya* (king's kinsman), *mahishi* (chief queen), *vavata* (favourite queen), *senani* (commander of the army), *bhagaduha* (probably collector of taxes) and *akshavapa* (superintendent of dicing). The loyalty of the *ratnins* was considered essential for the welfare of the state and the stability of the king. An important part of the consecration ceremony (*Rajasuya*) consisted in the king offering sacrifices to gods in their homes.

As was to be expected, the Later Vedic age witnessed important changes in the social set-up. The class distinctions of the earlier period, now fast crystallizing, were beginning to affect the homogeneity of society. Theorists of the time vigorously emphasized the differences between the various groups and made a noticeable impression[9]. Among other things, they laid formal restrictions on the choice of profession, assigning the work of teaching and performing sacrifices to the Brahmanas, that of governing to the Kshatriyas or Rajanyas, trade, agriculture and industrial arts to the Vaisyas and service of the upper classes to the Sudras. This formal division of economic and social activity did much to bring out in sharper relief the mutual sever-

ance of the classes. Much of the integrating effect of the abolition of distinction between Aryan and non-Aryan and the decline of tribalism was nulled by the growing prejudice of class.

The exaltation of kings further widened the gulf between the ruling class and the bulk of the people. As political organisation was developed, the Kshatriya nobles acquired greater rights and privileges than before and it is even thought by some that during this period they began to assume more and more the character of a landed aristocracy while the common people approximated to the position of tenants. Standing armies were formed of which they enjoyed the acknowledged leadership and their importance was further heightened as the tribesman, induced by the expanding economic activity of the time to concentrate his attention more and more on his profession or craft, gradually lost his original fighting habits. The simple tribal relationship of the nobility and the commoners, already modified considerably in the Rigvedic period, acquired a further stage of development in the age of the Later Veda.

The elaboration of the Vedic ritual (see *infra*) made it increasingly more difficult for persons belonging to non-priestly families to effectively discharge the functions of priests and thus enabled the Brahmanas to close their ranks against fresh aspirants from other classes. Another factor leading to the formation of an exclusive Brahmana class was the growing obscurity of the Vedic tongue. With the passage of time, the language of the old Vedic hymns gradually ceased to be understood by the people in general and their meaning and significance could now be explained only by persons belonging to families specially concerned with them. The same circumstance also put an end to the further composition of hymns which was a normal feature of the Rigvedic age and thus deprived the non-priestly persons of an easy means of gaining admittance into the Brahmana fold. All this tended to emphasize the heredity of the priestly profession and to secure for the Brahmanas, as the sole repositories of the sacred lore, a position of greater eminence in society than they had hitherto enjoyed. Like the Kshatriyas, the Brahmanas also became sharply demarcated from the common people

and developed into a compact social unit with heredity as its guiding principle. It has been pointed out that we know of no instance during this period of a person of the kingly or any other rank acquiring the status of Brahmana by change of profession and the rule that none but a Brahmana can officiate at sacrifices is definitely laid down.

Already in an early hymn of the Rigveda (VI. 75.10) we find the Brahmanas mentioned along with *pitris* (manes), a claim doubtless indicating the pretension of the priesthood to be regarded as the highest class in society. Numerous passages show that in the Later Vedic period the claim was pressed with increasing insistence but a long time elapsed before its authors could compel its full recognition. The literature of the time clearly reveals that the relative position of the Brahmanas and Kshatriyas in the social hierarchy was still not fully settled and a moral struggle was going on between the two for precedence. While one set of writers asserted that 'the Brahmana is the lord, nor the Rajanya, nor the Vaisya' or 'Brahmanas are visible gods,' there were also thinkers according to whom nothing was 'superior to the Kshatra, hence the Brahmana sits below the Kshatriya at the Rajasuya sacrifice'. The undisputed supremacy of the Brahmanas was not an established fact and the Kshatriyas did not easily concede their claim of superiority. This was but natural for the Kshatriyas not only had their pride of noble birth, wealth and power, but were hardly inferior to the Brahmanas even in respect of learning and culture. The best Brahmana scholars of the age recognised the eminence of kings like Janaka of Videha and Ajatasatru of Kasi as philosophers and thinkers and approached them for instruction. With the growing hold of ritualism, however, the Kshatriyas began to lose the ideological war and had finally to yield to their priestly antagonists.

As a natural corollary to the elevation of the Kshatriyas and Brahmanas, the Vaisyas lost importance and sank in the social scale. In the Later Vedic literature, there are many passages emphasizing the superiority of the two highest classes over the Vaisyas who are even described in one place as 'tributary to an-

other, to be lived on by another and to be oppressed at will'. Some of the Vaisya professionals whose crafts were somehow or other regarded as less honourable than the others, such as the carpenter (*takshan*) and the wheel-wright (*rathakara)*, even began to be assigned to a status different from, and apparently inferior to, that of the Vaisyas. The natural outcome of this tendency was that many Vaisyas engaged in what were supposed to be less dignified crafts gradually lost position and were finally included in the category of Sudra. The potter, the leather-worker, the iron-smith and many others were degraded in this way until at last the Vaisya's scope of activity became confined to trade and money-lending.

The Sudra was also affected by the increasing severity of class rules. In the texts he is spoken of as '*ayajin*' (not entitled to perform sacrifices) and is also described as 'servant of another, to be expelled at will, to be slain at will.' He was debarred from studying the Vedic scriptures and was not allowed to touch the oblations at sacrifices. The rule came into vogue that it was harmful for a consecrated person to touch a Sudra within the sacrificial enclosure.[10]

The Later Vedic works thus show a more rigid compartmentalisation of society than the Rigveda. But even now, of the complicated system known as 'caste', we can find only faint traces. One of its features, heredity as the basis of social division, is, of course, fairly recognisable, but the other characteristics are yet to crystallize. There is still no bar on intermarriage between the three upper classes. Marriage with Sudras is probably looked down upon—we find Kavasha and Vatsa being reviled in priestly circles for being born of Sudra mothers—but is not positively forbidden. Prohibition of interdining is not even thought of and persons of the higher classes have no objection whatsoever to taking food prepared by Sudra cooks. Some restrictions are imposed on contact with Sudras in the sacrificial area, but these are purely ceremonial, not affecting the ordinary life of the people.

At the period when these developments were taking place, the cultural, as also the political, centre of the Aryan world had

shifted eastward from the Punjab. The regions of Kurukshetra and the Ganges-Jamuna Doab had emerged as the new focal points of the Aryan civilisation and they continued to hold this distinction throughout the greater part of the Later Vedic age. The Punjab, the early home of the Aryans in India, itself had begun to be considered as a backward land peopled by men of 'impure descent, imperfect manners and customs'. As suggested by an eminent writer, this may be due to the fact that by now a fresh wave of Indo-Iranian invasion had swept over the Punjab bringing new people in the country who did not care much for the orthodox Vedic rites.

It is not easy to form an estimate of the change in the general habits of the people due to the improved material equipment of the age. Cities were few and even many *ibhyas* (wealthy persons or Kshatriyas) seem to have preferred to live in villages which could not have been much different from their earlier counterparts. The construction of houses, the styles of dress and garment and the recreations had probably not altered much since the age of the Rigveda. People were still eminent meat-eaters and lovers of intoxicating drinks. Here and there, however, reformers could now be heard raising their voice in protest against the use of meat and drink, branding it as an act of sin.[11]

The position of women reflects a change for the worse. The patrilineal structure of society, the presence of non-Aryan women as co-wives in the Aryan houses and the spread of ascetic ideals to which a reference will be made subsequently—all combined to lower the status of women. They were now denied the right of *Upanayana* (the sacred ceremony of the investure of the thread) and it was ordained that all their sacraments, except marriage, should be celebrated without Vedic *mantras*. The birth of daughters was dreaded as a source of misery and women were not infrequently described by persons of extreme views as 'evil personified' or grouped together with Sudras. The degradation of women, however, was not complete and their lot was still much better than that of their sisters of the present day. They took an active part in some of the most important sacrifices like Vajapaey and Rajasuya. Generous theorists regarded the husband as

'incomplete without the wife,' women were not excluded from the study of the Vedic and other higher subjects and some of them *e. g.* Gargi Vachaknavi and Maitreyi, are known to have acquired great fame by their learning and power of thought. Ordinarily they were given good training in dancing and singing and were thus enabled to lead a cultured life within the limits imposed by their sex.

The political and economic prosperity resulting from the expansion of the Aryans over North India, the foundation of big kingdoms and the establishment of flourishing cities enabled the priestly class to elaborate the ritual of worship much beyond the extent of the Rigveda. New and costly sacrifices were invented some of which (the Satra Yajnas) lasted from twelve days to a few years and required the services of as many as sixteen or seventeen priests. Increasing emphasis was laid on animal offerings and great attention was devoted to the development of the Soma sacrifices involving the slaughter of animals. The most important of the sacrifices were the complex rituals known as Asvamedha, Rajasuya and Vajapeya.[12] The texts of the period mention a terrible sacrifice called Purushamedha which was quite similar to the Asvamedha but with a human victim in place of the horse ; but it is doubtful if this ghastly rite was ever actually celebrated in practice. With this elaboration of its form and details, the sacrificial act itself began to rise in importance. In the Later Vedic texts it is no longer a simple mechanical act meant to secure the favour of gods, but a mysterious rite with a cosmic significance and application. It is the Cosmos itself. The various aspects and forces of Nature are the various limbs and movements of the Sacrificial Horse. "When the Horse shakes itself, it lightens ; when it kicks, it thunders ; when it makes water, it rains."

The growth of ritual affected domestic life also and a crowd of ceremonies, known as *Samskara* or Sacraments, assailed not only the terrestrial career of the individual but also his pre-natal and post-mortal existence. The theory of the *Samskaras* is first met with in an elaborate form only in the *Sutras* which pertain to a somewhat later age, but the beginning was made

in the Later Vedic period when some of the sacraments, such as the *Upanayana*, had already arrived at a considerably advanced stage of development, as is clear from the description of the ceremony occurring in the Satapatha Brahmana. A brief account of the *Samskaras* will be given in a subsequent chapter. The development of ritual enabled the Brahmanas to secure a footing in the common households from which they had hitherto been largely excluded by the simple nature of the domestic ceremonies. Many of the *grihya* rites were now attended to by Brahmanas who charged considerable fees for their labour and women began to gradually lose their place by the side of their husbands at religious functions.

The older Vedic gods gradually receded in importance. It is not Indra or Varuna who now occupies the position of pre-eminence in the Brahmana texts but the great Creator-God (*Prajapati*) who had made his appearance only in the later hymns of the Rigveda and now cast all the other deities into the shade. Being, however, mainly connected with cosmological speculations, he never took full possession of the fancy of the people which was strongly attracted about this time by Vishnu and Rudra, two of the lesser gods of the Rigvedic pantheon. In the Rigveda Vishnu is one of the subsidiary deities associated with the Sun, but in the Later Vedic age we find him sometimes occupying the high place of Varuna as the dispenser of the cosmic and moral law and his great importance may be judged from the fact that he is frequently identified with Sacrifice. The growing popularity of Rudra is also unmistakable. In the texts, he is already hailed as 'Great God' (*Mahadeva*, god par excellence) and styled *Siva* (the Auspicious One) and *Bhutapati* (Lord of Creatures). Prayers are now addressed to him in large numbers and his pre-eminence is clearly reflected in such works as the Aitareya and Satapatha Brahmanas. Along with Vishnu, he is well on the way to becoming the personal god of many and the day is not far off when the two deities will be the proud recipients of the offerings and devotion of special sects of votaries.

The exaltation of Rudra is significant in the highest degree and provides an indication of the great historical process by which the

foreign Aryans were now being rapidly Indianised, imbibing Indian ideas and traditions. As Keith puts it, 'the Rudra of this period can hardly be regarded as a mere development of the Rudra of the Rigveda; it seems most probable that with the Vedic Rudra is amalgamated an aboriginal god.......'..[13] After the excavations of the Indus Valley, there remains hardly any doubt that the Rudra of the Later Vedic texts was the result of the adoption to their system by the Brahmanas of a great god of pre-Aryan India, viz., the Horned God of Harappa, and that his great popularity was due to the high veneration in which he was held by the vast majority of the people who would not relinquish him for the Aryan gods. The reis of Rudra-Siva to prominence shows that the two streams of culture in India—the indigenous non-Aryan and the exotic Aryan —were no longer flowing apart but had started commingling and profoundly affecting each other. The Later Vedic texts make mention of a pleasing religious ceremony called *Vratya-Stoma* which was meant to admit the *Vratyas* into the Aryan fold. If, as is held by many scholars, the *Vratyas* were a non-Aryan people, this important rite will provide clear evidence that the social barriers were fast breaking down and the people of the country were drawing closer to each other.

It has been indicated above that the effects of the merging of the Aryans and non-Aryans into each other are best displayed in the domain of religious development. Nowhere are they more clearly reflected than in the religion of the Atharvaveda, though the evidence here pertains mainly to the lower aspects of religion. This great canonical work is mainly a collection of formulae, charms and spells for overcoming demons, bringing misfortune to enemies and rivals, removing ailments, acquiring riches and happiness and various other forms of success and felicity obtainable by magical rites. Its religion differs greatly from that of the other Vedic texts due to the preponderance of sorcery and witchcraft in its contents and the provision it makes for the worship of primitive, low-grade deities such as snakes, animals, stones, birds, apsaras etc., who are unknown to the Rigveda and the other *Samhitas*. It is generally recognised that the penetration of these novel features into the Aryan religion was the result of the

contact of the non-Aryan peoples of North India among whom such practices were widely prevalent.[14] It will perhaps be too much to say that superstitious or primitive ideas of this type were altogether absent among the Aryans when the latter entered India but it seems certain that they formed only a negligible part, if at all, of the original Aryan faith and worship. The priests of the Atharva-veda were clearly indebted to a large extent for these to the native priests of the country who specialised in them and it is by no means improbable that many of the Atharvanic Brahmanas were themselves people of non-Aryan origin to whom their proficiency in the magical lore had secured a place in the highest stratum of the Aryan society. It is interesting to note that for a long time the orthodox priests declined to give a place to the Atharvaveda in the Vedic canon, evidently because they valued the purity of their tradition highly. But the attempt to check the infiltration of the new rites and ideas failed completely and upto this day these constitute a very prominent element of Hinduism.

To this same factor—the influence of the non-Aryan cultural traditions—is also probably to be traced the growth and popularity of asceticism (*tapas*) which began to strongly affect the Aryan religious outlook from about the beginning of the Later Vedic period. It seems hardly possible that asceticism, implying self-mortification and renunciation of the world, could have evolved by itself out of the frankly materialistic, earth-bound sacrificial creed of the Rigveda. It is, in all likelihood, the result of the impact of non-Aryan thought. By the time of the Upanishads, it had gained wide currency and had even emerged as a sort of rival system to that of the cult of sacrifices. The belief gradually grew strong that through the practice of austerity could be acquired mystic, supernatural powers conferring benefits superior to those of sacrifices. The growing hold of this idea on the popular mind did much to detract attention from the sacrificial practices and in many quarters the mystic significance formally attached to sacrifice was transferred to asceticism. More and more people—non-Aryans and Aryans alike—began to adopt the garb of the ascetic, giving up the pleasures of the world for a life of self-chosen privations. The more extreme of these

dwelt in forests or outside villages and towns, exercising various types of austerities such as living on the scantiest quantities of food and water or even going without them, exposing their bodies to the cold of winter nights, sitting near fires in the blazing heat of the Indian summer, hanging from branches of trees, lying on a bed of spikes and thorns and so on. Others adopted a less rigorous discipline and believed in the possibility of the acquisition of bliss and enlightenment through meditation and ecstasy without taking recourse to extreme physical torture. These had their dwelling places near villages and towns but a good many of them were also wanderers (*Parivrajakas*) without any fixed abodes, moving up and down the country, living on alms or presents, giving discourses and engaging in intellectual bouts (*sastrartha*) with rival teachers. A strong wave of asceticism thus swept over the plains of North India and enthused the religious life of the country with a new type of consciousness. Kings and princes held the ascetics in high esteem and the common people prostrated themselves before them in awe and veneration.

As guardians of the orthodox lore, the Brahmanas could not long remain indifferent to this development. As the new ideas were too strong to be stemmed or neglected a place had to be found for them in the fold of the Brahmanical religion. It was probably in order to meet this exigency that, with their unmistakable genius for accommodation, the Brahmanas formulated the theory of the 'Four Stages', of life (*Asramas*), according an honoured place to asceitcism within the orbit of the Aryan faith. In its earliest form in the older Upanishads, this theory recognises only three 'Stages' viz., *Brahmacharya*, *Garhasthya* and *Vanaprastha* i.e., those of student, house-holder and the forest-dwelling hermit and makes out these as three different modes of life open to the Aryans. The *Vanaprastha* probably included both the settled hermit and the wandering ascetic at this period. It was at a somewhat later date that a distinct *Asrama* of Sannyasa was created and the four stages were represented as successive phases of life through which a member of the twice-born (*dvijati*) classes should pass.

The point hardly needs bringing out that the age of the Later Vedic literature was one of considerable philosophical and speculative ferment. The extant texts leave the clear impression that a very large number of people were engaged in pondering over questions relating to the nature of the Ultimate Reality, God, soul, life, death, merit, evil, and other cognate subjects. Though they hoped to acquire mystical powers by the exercise of austerities, the forest hermits and the wandering ascetics also strove to achieve true knowledge by meditation, and in many quarters the conviction became firmly entrenched that for salvation the 'way of knowledge' (*Jnanamarga*) is more efficacious than the 'way of works' (*Karmamarga*) of the Vedas. The activities of these thinkers and preachers created a stir in the country and applied a great fillip to thought and speculation. Even kings like Janaka of Videha, Pravahana Jaivali of Panchala and Ajatasatru of Kasi spared time from the multifarious duties of state to study the new learning and make contributions so it. The more orthodox of the thinkers, both Brahmanas and Kshatriyas, who relegated the Vedic rites and ceremonies to a lower place without altogether repudiating them, created a wonderful body of thought which is richly documented by the scriptural texts known as Aranyaka and Upanishad. While the former are concerned mainly with the symbolism of sacrifice, the latter are undoubtedly the product of some of the best minds of the age and constitute the most valuable contribution of India to the evolution of human thought. The number of Upanishads available to-day is quite large, but not all of them really go back to the pre-Buddhist period. It is in the case of such texts as the Brihadaranyaka and the Chhandogya that we can speak with some confidence of their having existed in the time of Buddha.

Considering the abstruse subjects of their study and discussion, it is not surprising that the Upanishadic sages had many differences of opinion among themselves and several conflicting views are found expressed by them. But it has been pointed out[15] that there is one strand of thought which is more prominently developed than the others and hence may be regarded as the main doctrine of the Upanishads. It may be summed up

briefly as follows : The Universal Self or the Absolute (*Brahman*) constitutes the Ultimate and the Only Reality and the Individual Self (*Atman*) is really identical with it—*tat tvam asi*. The emergence of *Atman* and the world from *Brahman* is only the differentiation of name and form (*Namarupa*). The mistaken sense of distinction (*Ahamkara*) brings the Individual Self into conflict with others and subjects it to life and death, pleasure and pain. When a person can overcome the illusion of individuality and become conscious of his identity with *Brahman*, he is liberated and freed from transmigration; his soul becomes one with *Brahman* rising above the experiences of mortal existence. This saving knowledge or the consciousness of oneness with *Brahman* (*Brahmajnana*) is gained by correct and earnest study and meditation for which it is necessary to cultivate the attitude of detachment (*Vairagva*) towards the world and its pleasures and lead a moral and restrained life. So long the vital knowledge is unacquired the necessity of repeated births and deaths (*Samsara*) will continue and the acts of the Individual done in one life will determine his weal and woe in the others (*Karma*). This is, in short, the great doctrine of the Upanishads which has swayed the Indian mind through the ages and has been the source of inspiration to many an eminent philosopher of the subsequent times.

Janaka Vaideha, Yajnavalkya, Satyakama Jabala, Uddalaka Aruni, Sandilya and Ghora Angirasa are some of the better known leaders of the Upanishadic thought movement. The last-named was a worshipper of the Sun and seems to have laid great store by moral and ascetic virtues. We learn from the Chhandogya Upanishad that he spoke slightingly of *vidhi-yajna*-(sacrificial ritual) and extolled *tapas* (asceticism), *dana* (charity), *arjava* (simplicity), *ahimsa* (non-injury) and *satyavachana* (truthfulness). These teachings he imparted to an inquisitive pupil called Krishna Devakiputra whose name has exerted a tremendous influence on the minds and leanings of millions of Indians. Though there are divergent views held by historians about the identity of Krishna, and some even deny his historicity, it seems almost certain that he was the son of Kshatriya Vasudeva belonging to the Satvata sect of the Vrishni (Yadava) tribe which

occupied the country about Madhura, (Mathura) in the Jamuna valley. He passed on the teachings of his *guru*, perhaps with some modification and adaptation, to his own disciples and thus became the founder of a school of thought. After his death, he was deified by his own people and designated as *Bhagavat* whence the doctrine propounded by him became known as Bhagavata Dharma. Another early name by which the doctrine was known was *Satvata-vidhi* after the tribe to which Krishna belonged. The deified Vasudeva-Krishna soon became a popular god claiming many votaries in North-Western and Western India. Subsequently he was identified with the gods Vishnu and Narayana and in that form became the personal god of not a few Indians at an early date.

Many of the Upanishadic ideas *e.g.* the belief in transmigration and the efficacy of actions to influence the course of future life were shared by other thinkers of the period whose teachings were never included in the sacred literature of the Brahmanas because of their marked heterodox tendencies, the scant respect they displayed for the Vedas and their sacrificial cult and, one suspects, their failure to tamely concede the Brahmanas' claim of social superiority. The teachers of his class were mostly ascetics and not a few of them were non-Aryrns who had drunk deep at the fountain of the pre-Aryan or Sramana lore of the country. Their views seem to have been many and varied. Among them were thorough going materialists who denied the existence of soul, dualists who believed in the existence of both matter and soul, agnostics who denied the possibility of true knowledge through senses, fatalists, eternalists, annihilationists and the opposites of these. It is unfortunate that no adequate record of these teachers has survived for their contribution to the common stock of the country's thought was very substantial and their intellectual activity formed the background of the great upheaval of the 6th century B. C. which gave birth to Buddhism. The memory of only one of these is preserved in literature. About 750 B. C. an aristocrat with a religious bent of mind, whom tradition represents as the son of the Ikshvaku king Asvasena of Banaras, left his home to practice penance and promulgated a doctrine of his own which became the foundation of Jainism. Parsva or Parsvanatha, as he

was called, was perhaps a believer in the duality and antagonism of Spirit and Matter. His fundamental precept was that the Spirit, corrupted by the contact of Matter, can be liberated by the exercise of austerities. His beliefs were incorporated bodily in the later Jaina doctrine as popularised by Mahavira Vardhamana and Jaina tradition rightly regards him as a *Tirthankara* (path-maker) of the faith. He founded an order of ascetics and lay devotees, called Nirgrantha, which soon had a following in the Gangetic Valley and for the guidance of the conduct of its members prescribed four major vows which were also adopted by Mahavira, viz. not to injure living beings (*ahimsa*,) not to speak falsehood (*satya*), not to steal or receive what is not freely given (*asteya*) and not to be attached or have any property (*aparigraha*). He probably allowed his followers the use of two garments—an upper and a lower one. The historical beginnings of Jainism are thus to be traced to the mental stir of the Later Vedic period. According to the Jainas, Parsva was the twenty-third *Tirthankara* of their religion and was preceded by twenty-two personages of similar eminence. The first twenty-two 'path makers' are generally supposed to be legendery figures but we need not be too sceptical about the historical value of the tradition. The origins of Jainism may after all be very old and at least one of its features—the emphasis on nudity—seems to go back to the Indus Valley, if not earlier still. The number twenty-four may not be quite accurate, but it is certain that Jainism represents the synthesis and the culmination of the ideas of many teachers who flourished before Mahavira.

What was at the root of the great mental activity of the Later Vedic period? The suggestion has been made that the relaxation of the necessity of constant struggle against the native foes (non-Aryans), the prosperity and leisure which accrued from the conquest of India and the enervating climate of the country turned the attention of the Aryans to philosophy and speculation, thus leading to the intellectual restlessness of the time. Such a view, however, ignores the greatest historical phenomenon of the period which provides a much more adequate explanation of its thought-ferment, namely, the coming together of the Aryan and non-Aryan streams of thought. Strong alike but opposd to each other in many essentials, the two were bound to lead to a great commotion by their meeting and interaction. We can well ima-

gine the outburst of the questioning spirit, the borrowings from each other, the revaluation of pet old theories and the search for new philosophical and religious values when the Aryan thinkers, the practical Brahmanas with their outlook coloured by theism, ritualism and a healthy materialism, met on the intellectual plane the Sramanas, their non-Aryan counterparts, among the more advanced of whom ideas about asceticism, *Samsaravadi*, and even atheism seem to have been firmly established. A somewhat similar, though less intense, situation arose when in the medieval times the Hindu tradition of thought came face to face with that of the Mussalaman conquerors and when the East met the West in India in the more recent centuries.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The Samhita of the Atharvaveda is mainly a collection of charms and magical rites intended both to bless and to curse. It is known to us in two recensions—Saunakiya and Pippalada. The Yajurveda is available in two forms viz., the Krishna or Black Yajurveda and the Sukla or white Yajurveda. The Sama Samhita is a collection of hymns sung at the Soma sacrifices by the priest known as Udgatri. With the exception of 75, all its hymns are taken from the Rigveda and are adapted to melody.

The Brahmanas are prose collections attached to the Vedas. They deal mainly with the significance and details of sacrifices. The best known of them are the Satapatha, Gopatha and Panchavimsa Brahmanas.

The Aranyakas are included in the Brahmanas and form their concluding portion or appendages. They deal chiefly with the mystic symbolism of sacrifices and are so-called because their contents were considered so subtle that they could be studied properly only in the solitude of forests. Of the extant Aranyakas, the Aitareya and the Kaushitaki relate to the Rigveda and the Taittiriya to the Yajurveda and are appended to the Brahmanas of the same names.

The important works known as Upanishad contain the philosophical speculations of the early Indians. They exist partly as separate texts and partly as portions of Brahmanas or Aranyakas. Among the more famous Upanishads mention may be mad of Brihadaranyaka, Chhandogya, Katha and Kena.

2. R. C. Majumdar, Ancient India, pp. 68f. The Satapatha Brahmana mentionse a number of kings who were great conquerors and performed the horse sacrifice, e.g. Bharata Dauhshanti, Satanika Satrajita, Para Atnar, Purukutsa Aikshavaka, Kraivya and Sona atrasaha of Panchala. The Aitareya Brahmana also gives the names of about a dozen rulers who celebrated the Asvamedha after extensive conquests.

3. Majumdar, opt. cit, opines that 'we may readily believe that political India was already displaying those characteristic features which have ever distinguished it in historical times, viz., a congeries of states, fighting for supremacy, and yielding at times to the irresistible force of a mighty empire builder'. But there is a good deal of exaggeration in the account of the exploits of these rulers as given in the texts and some of them may be purely imaginary. As pointed out by A. B. Keith, though 'there was considerable amalgamation of tribes and the formation of larger kingdoms than those in the period of Rigveda, yet it is significant that even the Kuru-Panchalas and still less Kosala-Videhas never amalgamated into single kingdoms.' (CHI. I, Indian Reprint, p. 112).

4. The Kuru kingdom comprised the Delhi region and a portion of the upper Gangetic Doab. Its capital was Asandivat or the later Hastinapura. The Panchala kingdom corresponded to modern Rohilkhand and the area to the south and had itss capital at Kampilya represented by Kampilla in the Farrukhabad District. Kosala was roughly modern Oudh, with metropolis at Ayodhya, near Fyzabad. The territory of Videha lay in North Bihar with Mithila as its principal centre. The kingdom of Kasi was founded by a Branch of the Bharatas and comprised the neighbourhood of Banaras.

5. It would, however, appear that iron was not extensively used in the country before the 4th-3rd Century B. C.

5a. Satapatha Br. V. 3.3.9.

6. AV. I, 9 ; III, 4.

7. CHI, I, p. 119.

8. Cf. the case of Sthapati Chakra who restored king Dushtartu to the throne.

9. This is clearly reflected in the minute rules framed for the guidance of the conduct of the various classes in this period. It was, for example, ordained that Brahmanas should perform sacrifices in spring, Kshatriyas in summer, and Vaisyas in autumn. The Brahmanas should use the Gayatri, Kshatriyas Trishtubh and Vaisya Jagati. Different species of wood were prescribed for the different classes for sacrificial sprinkling. Even in matters of courtesy and address different forms were laid down and different measures were recommended for the funerary mounds of the various classes.

10. Satapath Br. III, 1-1. There were other disabilities also inflicted on the Sundra. He was denied the right of initiation and of drinking Soma at sacrifices. Within the sacrificial area, he could perform only the menial services such as washing of feet.

11. This was obviously due to the growing popularity of ahimsa in this period It is not improbable that the non-aryan thinkers had an important hand in the diffusion of the ideas about ahimsa. Most of them were confirmed believers in the doctrine.

12. The Asvamedha or the horse-sacrifice was in reality a political ritual celebrated to establish the performer's supremacy over rival kings. The sacrificial horse was

let loose, accompanied by guards, to at will over the country for a year. Kings or chieftains through whose territories it happened to pass had to accept the sovereignty of the sacrificer or go to war with him. At the end of the year, the steed was brought back and duly sacrificed.

The Vajapeya, 'drink of strength', was also a political rite and was similar to the Asvamedha. It is said to have given the status of a 'Samrat' (Emperor) to the performing king. It was also intended to revitalise the latter.

The Rajasuya sacrifice was the ceremony by which the king was installed on the throne. An important part of it was the oath which the king had to take on the occasion in the presence of the people. 'Between the night I am born and the night I die, whatever good I may have done, my heaven, my life and my progeny may I be deprived of, if I oppress you.'

13. CH, I, P. 45.

14. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, I, pp. 118.

15. An excellent resume of the Upanishadic thought will be found in Hiriyanna' Outlines of Indian Philosophy, pp. 43—48.

16. For a full discussion of the subject see, H. C. Raychaudhuri, Material for the Study of the Early History of the Vaishnava Sect, 2nd Ed., Calcutta, 1936, Cf also Bhandarkar, Vaishnavism, Saivism and other minor Religious Systems.

PART II

Beginnings of Political Unity : The Ascendancy of Magadha

CHAPTER I

THE RISE OF MAGADHA

From the sixth century B.C. a strong centralising tendency is visible in Indian politics. The vague unifying effort of the Later Vedic period acquires a concrete shape and the fact becomes patent that the general trend of events is now in the direction of political unity. Slowly but surely a superior controlling force triumphs over centrifugal elements and leads to the emergence of a supreme power, that of Magadha, in the country. The process is a diffused one, lasting for about three centuries, and it is only in the Maurya period that its culmination is reached in the form of a great empire embracing nearly the whole of the Indian sub-continent. Its early stages upto the time of the foundation of the Maurya dynasty form the subject-matter of this chapter.

A. THE 'SIXTEEN GREAT STATES' (c. 600-550 B. C.)

There is no direct evidence bearing on the political condition of India at the commencement of the sixth century B. C. But from what we know about the concluding phases of the Later Vedic period from the Brahmana works and the second half of the century from the early Buddhist and Jaina texts, it is possible to infer the situation with a fair amount of certainty. The political traditions of the Later Vedic period were still vigorous and there was no paramount power in the country which was split up into a number of independent states. Side by side with monarchies like Kosala, Vatsa, Magadha, Gandhara and Madra there existed 'republican' communities like the Vajjis, Mallas, Sakyas and others who prized the old tribal tradition of 'free' government and in the more inaccessible regions—in mountains, forests or on the fringes of deserts—many petty chieftainships flourished in comparative isolation, cut off from the main currents of political development. The picture was one of considerable fragmentation and confusion.

In many places in the early Buddhist works, we come across a list of 'Sixteen Great States' (*Solasa Mahajanapada*) which is

obviously not merely geographical, but describes the political divisions of India at a certain period of her annals. It must be a fairly old list as it occurs in the earliest strata of the canon, but it does not fit in with the conditions prevailing in the Buddha's own day and there are some indications that it may be true of the immediately pre-Buddha period, *i.e.*, the early part of the 6th century and the concluding years of the previous one.[1] It appears that in the small-state system of the tmie the sixteen powers named in it figured more prominently than the others and were regarded as 'Great States' of the day. According to an ancient authority, the Anguttara Nikaya, all of them were 'populous and prosperous' states and their names are given as follows: Kasi (Banaras region), Kosala (Oudh), Anga (Bhagalapur and the neighbouring areas of Bihar), Magadha (Gaya and Patna Districts of South Bihar), Vajji (North Bihar), Malla (Deoria District, U. P.), Chedi (between the Jamuna and the Narmada), Vamsa or Vatsa (Allahabad and Banda Districts of U. P.), Kuru (Meerut-Delhi-Thaneswar area), Panchala (Rohilkhand), Matsya or Machchha (Jaipur region), Surasena (Mathura), Avanti (Western and Central Malwa), Asmaka or Assaka (parts of the Godavari Valley), Gandhara (Peshawar and Rawlpindi Districts) and Kamboja (also in the north-west). While most of these were monarchies, Vajji and Malla were kingless peoples, upholding the 'republican' tradition in the Gangetic Valley. The Vajjis, also known as Lichchhavis, were a powerful confederation of as many as eight constituent clans with their principal centre at the flourishing city of Vaisali in North Bihar, now represnted by the ruined mounds at the village of Besarh in the Muzaffarpur District.

Though our knowledge of the political activities of these principal states of the early sixth century is extremely insufficient, enough remains to show that many of them followed expansionist policies and were at daggers drawn with their neighbours. The lords of Kosala were engaged in a death-grapple with the kings of Kasi; the mutual rivalry of these adjacent powers for the dominant position in the upper Ganges Valley was of old standing now. The extant sources leave the impression that at first Kasi had the upper hand and the Kosalan monarchs were frequently humbled. But at last the tables were reversed. The 'Kosa-

lan mountaineers' began to triumph over the southern rivals and kings like Banka and Dabbasena contributed substantially to the dimunition of the power of Kasi. Further to the east, Anga and Magadha formed another important group of rivals, contending for supremacy in the Central Gangetic tract. We hear of kings of Anga like Dadhivahana who, if they do not belong to the domain of legend, apparently flourished about this time and whose warlike efforts prevailed against their Magadhan adversaries. In the south-west, Avanti and Asmaka were probably doing their best to break the power of each other. The spirit of rivalry had apparently spread to other regions also and important powers were trying to consolidate their position everywhere by conquest or peaceful assimilation. In spite of the inadequacy of sources it is clear that the 'Age of the Sixteen Great States' was one of considerable political activity and unrest.

B. THE FOUR GREAT MONARCHIES

(c. 550-490 B. C.)

From about the middle of the 6th century B. C. or shortly before, the variegated political pattern of India begins to register a marked change, specially in the central and eastern regions. The actual details of this change are not known, but obviously the keen rivalries of the *Mahajanapadas* and the absorption of many smaller states into bigger ones go far to account for it. The outcome of these developments was that many of the older states soon disappeared from view being annexed by their more powerful neighbours and strong monarchies sprang into prominence in the different parts of North India. Before the end of the century much of the confusion which had characterised the earlier years was already cleared and the political stage had come to be completely dominated by four great kingdoms. In place of the unstable balance of the sixteen major states there was now an effective concentration of power in these four and the main strings of the country's politics were controlled by them. Most of the other *Mahajanapadas* were either amalgamated with them or existed only as second-rate powers, divested of their former eminence. The four states which thus rose high in the political firmament were the kingdoms of Kosala, Vatsa, Avanti and Magadha.

The rise of Kosala (corresponding roughly to modern Oudh, with metropolis at Sravasti) was due mainly to the collapse of Kasi. The bitter conflict between these two powers was ultimately decided in favour of Kosala and not much before the rise of Buddhism the southern kingdom was absorbed by it. The final conquest of Kasi (c. 560 B. C.) was probably effected by King Kamsa who is given the significant epithet of '*Baranasiggaho*' (captor of Varanasi) in the Jataka books which are our main source of information about this memorable struggle. The fall of Kasi made Kosala the premier state of the upper Gangetic Valley. The Kosalan kings evidently extended their sway in other directions also until their dominions comprised the whole of modern Oudh and the adjoining areas from the Himalaya in the north to the Ganges in the south and west. About the middle of the sixth century, the throne of Kosala was occupied by a king whose name or cognomen was Mahakosala and who *may* have been the immediate successor of Kamsa. On his death, the fortunes of the kingdom passed into the hands of his son Pasenadi (Prasenajit), a prince of remarkable vigour and ability. A contemporary and personal friend of the Buddha, Prasenajit was the ruler of Kosala during the greater part of the 2nd half of the sixth century and the opening years of the next century. He not only administered the territory of Kosala proper but exercised protective sovereignty over the Sakyas inhabiting the region of Kapilavastu and the Kalamas of Kesaputta who lived near the Gomati. Besides, he also seems to have wielded considerable influence among the Mallas of Kusinara and Pava some of whose eminent men took up service under him. During his long reign the prestige of Kosala stood very high in North India. The Buddhist text Samyutta Nikaya bears testimony to his great power by describing him as the head of a group of five *rajas*. An important event of his reign (or of that of his father) was the marriage of his sister Kosaladevi with Bimbisara of Magadha. The loving brother (or father) sanctioned to the bride the revenues of Kasi (or a part of it) for bath and perfume money, thus inadvertently providing a fruitful cause of contention between Magadha and Kosala in the subsequent period.

The expansion of the kingdom of Vatsa (capital Kausambi,

represented by modern Kosam on the Jamuna, (33 miles to the south-west of Allahabad) appears to have begun about the same time as that of Kosala. The dynasty that ruled it in the sixth century belonged to the lineage of the Bharatas and is said to have been descended from Nichakshu, the great-great-grandson of Janamejaya, who established his capital at Kausambi after Hastinapura had been washed away by the Ganges. The earliest Bharata (Paurava) king of Kausambi about whom something is known is Satanika Parantapa who probably ruled about 550 B. C. According to tradition, he married a princess of Videha and made war on Anga. Such stories cannot be accepted in their entirety, but Satanika appears to have been an important chief and probably made some contribution to the growth of the power and prestige of Vatsa. His son and successor, Udayana, a contemporary of the Buddha and Prasenajit, was a greater figure and ranked as one of the foremost potentates of his time. Though known chiefly as the hero of many a romantic tale, he was also a doughty fighter and certainly extended the bounds of the Vatsa kingdom by some notable conquests of which, however, no trust worthy record has survived. An apparently fictitious account of his campaigns occurs in the Kathasaritsagara of Somadeva (11th century A. D.) and the Priyadarsika of Sri Harsha refers to his triumph over the king of Kalinga which must be likewise a product of the dramatist's traditional licence. The exact extent of the Vatsa territory under him cannot be ascertained but it appears that much of it lay to the south of the Jamuna and Ganges and bordered on Avanti in the west. The republican Bhaggas (Bhargas) of Sumsumaragiri (in the Vindhya region between the Jamuna and the Son) probably acknowledged his sovereignty for we read that his son Bodhi resided among them. He is said to have married princesses belonging to the ruling houses of Anga, Magadha and Avanti. With Pajjota, the ambitious ruler of the last named state, he was engaged in war though his wife, Vasavadatta, was the daughter of that king.

It is difficult to say whether or not an old tradition representing Pradyota or Chanda Pradyota Mahasena (Pajjota of the Buddhist texts) as a new-comer to the kingly rank is based on fact. The

(minister or high functionary) who overthrew his master and installed his son on the throne. Whatever may have been the manner in which Pradyota gained the kingdom, he was a person of zeal and ambition and it was perhaps largely under his patronage that Avanti rose to be a great power in Western India. The Puranas describe him as '*pranata-samanta*', thus showing that he reduced some neighbouring principalities and carved out a high position for himself in the politics of the time. Personally he appears to have been of a cruel disposition and haughty temper and inspired a good deal of fear in his contemporaries. The limit of his sovereignty is difficult to delineate but it probably embraced the whole of Malwa plateau along with some contiguous tracts to the east and south. A Buddhist story about an unsuccessful campaign of his against the distant country of Gandhara may or may not be true; some writers regard it as unreliable legend. At one time he is said to have threatened the realm of Magadha also.

The kingdom of Magadha (capital Girivraja-Rajagriha) at first comprised only some parts of South Bihar round the Gaya and Patna Districts. Its early history is obscure. The Rigveda refers to a chief called Pramaganda ruling in Kikata which is generally identified with Magadha, but no other king of the region seems to be mentioned in the Vedic literature. The earliest dynasty of Magadha, according to the Mahabharata and the Puranas, was the one founded by Brihadratha, the son of Vasu Uparichara and the father of Jarasandha. Reliable details of the history of this dynasty, which is said to have ended with Ripunjaya, are lacking and it is only after its fall, probably about the beginning of the sixth century, that firmer ground is reached. Already in the early part of the century we find Magadha figuring as a *Mahajanapada* with a serious rival in its eastern neighbour, Anga, and its subsequent history is one of uninterrupted rise to greatness as the first paramount power of India. The less corrupt texts of the Puranas place a *Saisunaga* line, founded by a king named Sisunaga, immediately after the Birhadrathas, and assign Bimbisara, a contemporary of the Buddha, to it. This order of succession is evidently erroneous. Most scholars now ploce Sisunaga a few generations after, *not before*, Bimbisara and conclude that the family to which the

latter belonged came to occupy the throne of Magadha soon after, if not immediately after, the disappearance of the Barhadrathas.

The name of that family was probably *Haryanka*[4] and there is some reason to believe that it belonged to the stock of the Nagas. About the middle of the sixth century the Haryankas emerge into the limelight with the accession of King Bimbisara, not improbably in 544-3 B. C.[5] Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar is inclined to think that he was a person of non-kingly rank who began his career as a general in the service of the Vajjis or Lichchhavis of Vaisali who exercised sway over Magadha at this time and later became independent by driving his masters away. This view cannot be said to be properly substantiated and there seems no good ground to reject the Buddhist tradition that Bimbisara's father was himself king in Magadha before him. The new prince, a friend and patron of the Buddha, may justly be regarded as the founder of the greatness of Magadha in the historical period. Capable and ambitious like his noted contemporaries, he seems to have been gifted with a keen political insight which enabled him to adjust his relations with the neighbouring powers in a sagacious manner. He evidently clearly perceived that Magadha could as yet ill afford to cross the path of the great monarchies and that the only safe opening for aggression lay in the east where the small kingdom of Anga was hopelessly isolated by reason of its geographical position. Even the war with Anga would require undivided attention ; the elimination of the fear of external aggression was a condition precedent for success in it. Accordingly, the shrewd monarch of Magadha set about the task of establishing friendly relations with the great chiefs and military captains of the time by a system of matrimonial and political alliances. He espoused Chellana, the daughter of the celebrated *ganaraja* Chetaka of the Lichchhavi or Vajji republic of Vaisali (North Bihar) and thus secured the northern frontier of Magadha. His marriage with Kosaladevi, the sister of Prasenajit of Kosala, brought him not only the friendship of that powerful monarchy but also the revenues of the province of Kasi (or a part of it) amounting to an annual sum of a hundred thousand pieces by way of dowry[9]. He sought to gain the good will of Pradyota, the

warlike king of Avanti, by amicable advances and is known to have offered him the services of his Taxila-trained physician, Jivaka, when he was suffering from an attack of jaundice. His policy of friendship extended to some distant rulers of the country beyond the circle of his immediate neighbours. King Rudrayana of Roruka in Sind and Pukkusati (Pushkarasarin) of Gandhara were his allies and his talented wife Khema was a princess of the Madra country in the Central Punjab. It is not improbable that he tried to cultivate friendly relations even with Darius, the great Achaemenian ruler of Persia (522-485 B. C.), for we are told in the Apocryphal, the Greek version of the book of Ezra, that the Persian king entertained at a great feast, among many others, an embassy from the king of Magadha. Having in this way consolidated his position and greatly increased the influence of his family, he turned his attention seriously to the affairs in the east and entered into war with Anga. No details of the conflict are vouchsafed us but there is no doubt about its conclusion. Brahmadatta, the raja of Anga, failed to hold his own against the energetic ruler of Magadha and was defeated and deposed. His kingdom was converted into a crown province of Magadha and prince Ajatasatru was probably appointed the first Magadhan viceroy there.

With the annexation of Anga Magadha emerged as the chief power in the eastern part of India and became a serious rival of Kosala for supremacy in the Ganges basin. The victory of Bimbisara "launched Magadha to that career of conquest and aggrandisement which only ended when Asoka sheathed the sword after the conquest of Kalinga". The Magadhan kingdom now embraced nearly the whole of Bihar south of the Ganges and, if tradition may be believed, it was already 300 leagues in extent. These territories were administered efficiently by the king who paid personal attention to the details of his government, punishing the bad or incompetent officers and rewarding the others. An interesting feature of his administration was a great assembly of the village headmen of the realm which he seems to have convened for discussing the local affairs of the kingdom.

Tradition credits him with building roads and causeways and founding a new town at the site of Rajagriha.

C. THE PRE-EMINENCE OF MAGADHA

King Bimbisara died in c. 490 B. C. after an alleged reign of fifty two years. According to the unanimous testimony of the Buddhist works, he was deposed, imprisoned and finally murdered by his unfilial son, Ajatasatru, who is known as Kunika to the Jainas. About the time of his demise the political situation in North India was marked by great tension. The inevitable contest for the paramount status had begun in the earnest and the four major powers were striving hard to enlarge the bounds of their dominions and influence. Their mutual disputes and the ultimate emergence of Magadha as the victor from the fray constitute the main theme of Indian history during the next two centuries. The scantiness of sources makes it impossible to re-tell the story in detail ; only a sketchy and, in places frankly hypothetical, account can be given. Enveloped in the mass of religious legends and edifying tales in the early Buddhist and Jaina texts we have true reminiscences of some important events, but many vital links are missing and the chronological uncertainties are annoying.

Aiming at the control of as much as possible of the Gangetic Valley, the kings of Magadha clashed with the rulers of Kosala. According to several Buddhist works, Ajatasatru, the new sovereign of Magadha (c. 490-460), fell out with Presenajit of Kosala over the question of Kasi (or a part of it) which had been given to queen Kosaladevi for pin-money and which Prasenajit desired to withhold from the murderer of his brother-in-law. War ensued in which Ajatasatru had some initial success but was finally taken prisoner by the Kosalan monarch. It is stated that Prasenajit at first thought of confiscating his army and kingdom but ultimately brought hostilities to a peaceful close by giving his daughter , Vajira ,in marriage to the captive prince and dismissing her with the disputed territory as a dowry piece. The kernel of truth in these stories seems to be that about the beginning of the fifth century B. C. the political aspirations of

Kosala and Magadha (both of which had developed into first-class powers by now) began to collide and they fought an indecisive war, the question of Kasi providing the pretext. The first clash of ambitions left Magadha in a slightly better position than before as Kasi was now probably added permanently to it ; we learn from the *Aryamanjusrimulakalpa* that the dominions of Ajatasatru included Kasi. A suggestion broached in some quarters that the acquisition of full control over Kasi implies the establishment of supremacy over Kosala itself does not appear reasonable.

Hostilities suspended for the time being, the two rival states began to make feverish efforts for the expansion of their power. In Kosala the aged Prasenajit was soon overthrown by his ambitious son, Vidudabha, with the help of the commander-in chief, Dirgharayana (c. 485 B. C.). The new ruler continued the aggressive policy of the deposed monarch and made an onslaught on the semi-independent territory of the Sakyas of Kapilavastu which he finally subjugated and integrated into Kosala. On the other hand, Ajatasatru waged a relentless war of extirpation against the Vajji (Lichchhavi) republic of Vaisali in North Bihar whose displeasure his father had been anxious to avoid[3]. His attitude created a stir among the republican tribes of Eastern India and it appears that a powerful republican coalition, headed by the Vajjis and the Mallas and including many other tribal states of the neighbourhood, sprang into existence to offer resistance to the Magadhan aggressor. Buddhist sources represent the conflict as a duel between Raja-griha and Vaisali but the correct tradition on the point seems to be preserved in the Jaina *Nirayavaliya Sutta.* According to this well-known work, when Chetaka, the then President of the republic of Vaisali, learnt about the hostile intention of Kunika (i.e. Ajatasatru), he called together the 'nine Licchhhavis, nine Mallakis and the eighteen republican chiefs (*ganarayani*) of the Kasi-Kosala tract' and evidently convinced them of the desirability of a united front against Ajatasatru whose ambition threatened danger to them all. The great clash of the imperialist and republican ideals in Eastern Hindustan caused a wide-spread political sensation inducing even an eminent recluse like the Buddha to take sides in the fray. The ensuing war was naturally a protracted

one and taxed the resources of Magadha to the utmost. In order to repulse the counter attacks of the Vajjis and to have a better base of operations against them, Ajatasatru built a fortress at Pataligrama at the confluence of the Ganga and the Son—the nucleus of the future Pataliputra. His secret agents, headed by the crafty minister Vassakara, worked hard to disrupt the internal cohesion of the Vajjis and in open fight he seems to have made use of some new weapons with deadly effect. At last, the resistance of the republicans was overcome and the territory of the Vajjis was annexed to the Magadhan kingdom whose frontiers were thus carried to the neighbourhood of the Himalayan foot-hills in the north. A similar fate probably befell the Mallas and the other confedrates and a considerable portion of U. P. also passed under the sway of Magadha[7]. Between themselves Vidudabha and Ajatasatru may be said to have put an end to republicansim as a factor in the politics of North-Eastern India.

We may infer with reasonable certainty that on the completion of these conquests Kosala and Magadha resumed their strife for the possession of the Gangetic Valley. But the subsequent course of the rivalry is not clearly perceived. Abruptly the sources now cease to speak of Kosala while Magadha continues to find prominent mention in them. Their silence doutless indicates that the power of Kosala received a set-back but the circumstances leading to this are shrouded in obscurity. The suggestion has been made that the reign of Vidudabha came to an end within a few years of the triumphant march on Kapilavastu and his kingdom was incorporated into Magadha soon afterwards. This is doubtful as the Puranas name a few successors of Prasenajit in the list of the Ikshvaku kings of Kosala, besides Kshudraka or Viruddhaka who seems to be no other than Vidudabha. But one gathers a strong impression that after Vidudabha Kosala ceased to be a great power of the Gangetic Valley and its kings played no important role in the troubled politics of the subsequent days. How this happened may be surmised but is not known and we are faced here with one of the many inconvenient gaps of ancient Indian history.

The Paurava state of Vatsa (Kausambi) also does not figure prominently in the sources relating to the times of Ajatasatru and his successors. Instead, we find the kings of Avanti, whose dominions were situated further beyond, represented as the chief western rivals of the Magadhan sovereigns during this period. A tradition recorded in the Majjhima Nikaya states that Ajatasatru had to strengthen the fortifications of his capital, Rajagriha, as Pradyota of Avanti was making preparation to attack it. Whether the threatened invasion was ever actually made or not we have no means of deciding. The Puranas name Darsaka[8] as the successor of Ajatasıru but this has been shown to be a mistake and, in accordance with the combined testimony of the Buddhist and Jaina works, the reign of Udayin or Udayi-bhadda is now generally placed immediately after that of Ajatastru. About this new prince of Magadha we read in the *Parisishtaparvan* of Hemachandra that the king of Avanti was his enemy and had suffered several reverses at his hand. It appears that the high tradition of Vatsa was not maintained for long. Even in the life-time of Udayana the kingdom seems to have fallen to some extent under the influence of Avanti—the ambitious plan of Pradyota to invade Magadha seems to imply this—and, like Kosala, it probably dropped out of the contest in the early part of the fifth century, leaving the issue to be fought out between Avanti and Magadha. Eventually it was conquered and absorbed by Avanti whose position was thus considerably strengthened in the fight against the eastern power.

The reign of Udayin (c. 460-445 B. C.) is famous for the foundation of Pataliputra and the transference of the capital from Girivraja-Rajagriha to the new town[9]. In relation to the growing teritory of Magadha, Pataliputra was more centrally situated and occupied commercially and strategically a pasition of great vantage at the junction of the Ganga and the Son. The building of the city was probably started about the fourth year of Udayin in the neighbourhood of the strong fortress which the ministers of Ajatasatru had constructed at the site. After Udayin, the throne of Magadha passed on successively to Anuruddha, Munda and Nagadasaka during whose obscure regimes the au-

thority of Magadha seems to have registered no further growth. There were probably intermittent clashes with Avanti, but no direct evidence of this has survived. At a date which could not have been far removed from 400 B.C., Nagadasaka was overthrown, under somewhat mysterious circumstances, by Sisunaga (Susunaga), an official occupying the high rank of *amatya*. The origin of Sisunaga is not known for certain, but his accession was probably not exactly a dynastic revolution[10]. Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar infers from the name ending—*naga* that he was perhaps related to his predecessor Nagadasaka and belonged to a junior or collateral branch of the Haryanka-Naga family itself. It is, however, customary to designate his family as 'Saisunaga' to distinguish it form Bimbisara and his descendants. The Brahmanical tradition makes him the progenitor of the dynasty of Bimbisara, but that is obviously confused history.

A casual reference in the Puranas seems to suggest that Sisunaga was at first the Magadhan viceroy at Varanasi (Banaras). On his elevation to kingship, he appointed his son to the viceroyalty and, for some reason unknown to us, took up his own royal residence at the old city of Girivraja in preference to Pataliputra. If tradition may be believed, his reign of about eighteen years' duration (c. 410—390 B. C.) marks a very important step forward in the expansion of Magadha. After a gap of two generations (counting the short reigns of Anuruddha and Munda as one generation), the sources speak again of the titanic rivalry between Avanti and Magadha, and it is now the final stage of it. The Puranas record that Sisunaga 'destroyed the entire glory' of the Pradyotas which obviouly means that he inflicted a crushing defeat on the contemporary king of Avanti and spread the sovereignty of Magadha over that distant kingdom. Details are again lacking, but it has been suggested that the power of Avanti had suffered somewhat due to a recent revolution in that state and the unfortunate prince overthrown by the Magadhan forces was Avantivardhana.

It was a remarkable triumph which cleared the last and the most serious hurdle from the path of Magadha. Avanti had by now annexed Vatsa and built up a high position in Central and

Western India quite analogous to that of Magadha in the Gangetic Valley. Round about 400 B.C., the political stage in India was completely dominated by these two great states whose frontiers came into contact with each other somewhere in the Allahabad-Benaras region. The logic of imperialism demanded the elimination of one of the two and, thanks to the efforts of Sisunaga, it was Avanti that was eliminated. The victory of Sisunaga enabled the Magadhan monarchy to spurn the limits of the Gangetic Valley to which, despite the successes of Bimbisara and Ajatasatru, it had been confined so far, and spread its tentacles over the other parts of the country. The tiny chieftainship of South Bihar was now a great kingdom stretching from the frontiers of Bengal to Malwa and embracing a good part of the U. P. There no longer was any serious rival to contend with ; the tide of Magadha's fortune ran high[11].

D. FURTHER EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION : THE NANDAS

Kalasoka *alis* Kakavarna, the son and successor of Sisunaga, reversed the choice of his father and shifted the capital back to Pataliputra. This prince, whose reign looms large in the ecclesiastical annals of the Buddhists because of the convention of the second general assembly at Vaisali (c. 380 B. C.), 'had a dagger thrust into his throat' in the vicinity of his capital. The name of the regicide is not disclosed, but circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that he was no other than Mahapadma or Ugrasena who founded the celebrated Nanda dynasty, the second or third historical dynasty of Magadha, about the middle of the fourth century.

The origin of the Nandas is variously given by the ancient authorities. According to the Puranas, the first of them was the son of the last king of the preceding line (Saisunaga) by a Sudra wife. In certain late Buddhist texts he is represented as a 'warrior-like' person of 'unknown lineage' who fell into the hands of a band of robbers, became its leader and soon won a kingdom. A different tradition about the ancestry of the Nandas is preserved by Hemachandra in his *Parisish-*

taparvan. The great Jaina litterateur tells us that the founder of the dynasty was the son of a courtesan by a barber. The story of the barber extraction of the Nandas is corroborated by the classical writer Curtius and is generally supposed to be more reliable than the other traditions on the point. Speaking of Agrammes, the Magadhan contemporary of Alexander who was probably a son of Mahapadma-Ugrasena, Curtius says that his father was a barber. The following is the account of rise of the Nandas as given by him :

'His father (i. e., the father of Agrammes) was in fact a barber scarcely staving off hunger by his daily earnings but who, from his being not uncomely in person, had gained the affections of the queen, and was by her influence advanced to too near a place in the confidence of the reigning monarch. Afterwards, however, he treacherously murdered his sovereign and then, under the pretext of acting as guardian to the royal children, usurped the supreme authority, and having put the young princes to death, begot the present king.'

The above story is not confirmed by any other source but there is nothing inherently improbable in it and we may accept it as a fact that Mahapadma acquired the throne by a palace conspiracy. The murdered sovereign was probably Kalasoka-Kakavarna and the 'too near a place in the confidence of the reigning monarch' *may* have been the office of Prime Minister for we read in the *Aryamanjusrimulakalpa* that Nanda at first held that exalted post under the last king of the Kalasoka-Visoka family. In the *Parisishtaparvan* Nanda figures as the immediate successor of Udayin, which is apparently wrong.[12]

However distasteful the elevation of the Nandas to royalty may have been to the orthodox and aristocratic elements of the realm due to their 'low' origin, politically it proved highly advantageous to Magadha. Mahapadma-Ugrasena was a determined imperialist and an astute war-leader. A worthy inheritor of the policy of Bimbisara, Ajatasatru and Sisunaga, he occupies a place in the history of early Magadha hardly inferior to that of any of these great rulers. It is doubtful if the blue-blooded Saisunagas, had their regime been allowed to continue,

could have furthered the cause of Magadha to the same extent as this redoutable upstart. Led by him, Magadhan armies went father afield than ever before. Simultaneously, he also seems to have put an end to quite a few subordinate dynasties within the empire which recognised its supremay only in a vague way, and thus helped to convert it into a well-integrated political unit. Such was the impression made on the minds of the ancient chroniclers of the land by his military and political success that in referring to him we find the Puranic narrative following a more emphatic style than the usual apathetic one it reserves for others. He was, to the Puranic bards, 'a second Bhargava (Parasurama),' 'the destroyer of all Kshatriyas (*Sarvakshatrantakanripa*)' and the 'the sole monarch of the earth (*ekarat*)' 'whose command was inviolable (*annullanghitasasana*)'. The Puranas do not make clear mention of any specific conquests, but a careful study of their evidence shows that the dynasties which had to feel his might and were uprooted by him included, among others, the Ikshvakus (of Kosala), Panchalas (of the Ganges-Jamuna Doab), Kasis (of the Banaras region), Haihayas (of the Narmada Valley), Kalingas (of Southern Orissa and Ganjam), Asmakas (of the Godavari region), Kurus (of the Delhi area), Maithilas (of North Bihar), Surasenas (of Mathura) and Vitihotras (of Malwa).

The above Puranic account is corroborated in some details by independent evidence and a strong presumption is thus raised in favour of its trustworthiness. Thus the conquest of Kosala by the Nandas is also suggested by the *Kathasaritsagara* which speaks of a camp of King Nanda in Ayodhya. The annexation of Kalinga is undoubtedly borne out by a reference in the Hathigumpha Inscription informing us that Nandaraja took away from the province certain sacred objects and had an aqueduct excavated there. The presence of a city called 'Nau Nanda Dehra' (Nander) on the Godavari is taken by some to confirm the inclusion of the Asmaka territory of the Deccan in the Nanda dominions.

The strongest proof of the unification of a large part of India

under Mahapadma and his successors is furnished by the observations of the classical writers who derived their information from the companions of Alexander. Several of these speak of a great kingdom in the interior of India to the east of the Beas, headed at the time by Agrammes or Xandrames, the contemporary Nanda emperor, with its capital at Palibothra (Pataliputra). According to Curtius and Diodorus, he was the sovereign both of the Prasii (Prachyas) and the Gangaridae (possibly the people of the lower Ganges Valley), inhabiting the farther bank of the Ganges, and maintained a great army to guard the approaches to his country. Agrammes apparently inherited his great power and wide possessions from Mahapadma who may thus be described as the first great historical emperor of India. Under him the empire of Magadha probably embraced not only the whole of North India from Orissa to Malwa and the confines of the Punjab but also a considerable portion of the Deccan plateau. The advance to the last named region would normally presuppose the conquest of Gujrat and Kathiawar. The extensive territories of the Nanda Empire were not held by local rulers paying only a nominal homage to the Magadhan emperors, but formed, in the central regions at least, a consolidated dominion over which the imperial government at Pataliputra exercised effective hold. One sovereign will now controlled the greater part of Northern India excluding Kashmir, Punjab and Sind, as also the northern regions of the Daccan. Jaina writers allude to the sway of Nanda as extending down to the sea, a description not applied by the sources to the territories of any historical ruler before this.

Several inscriptions discovered in Mysore speak of the rule of the Nandas in Kuntala (Southern Bombay and the north-western part of Mysore). The epigraphs in question are of a comparatively modern date (10th to 12th century A. D.) and as early confirmation is lacking their evidence is commonly discredited. In view, however, of the proximity of Kuntala to the Godavari region parts of which are generally supposed to have been included in the Nanda Empire and the references to the Nandas in some early South Indian (Tamil) poems, we shall probably not be

justified in altogether ignoring the testimony of the inscriptions. Kuntala formed a part of the Maurya Empire and there is no definite proof that it was a new conquest of the Mauryas. 'It may, after all, be that the Kannad inscriptions mentioned above preserve a correct tradition and that the Mauryas came by their southern possessions as a matter of course by overthrowing the imperial dynasty of the Nandas'. If this view is accepted, the credit for extending Nanda rule to Kuntala is probably to be given to Mahapadma rather than to any of the later Nandas.

The successors of Mahapadma inherited from him not only a big empire but also a large army, in accordance with its needs. The military resources of Magadha had no doubt been developing for a long time, but the sources leave the impression that the Nandas paid special heed to this aspect of Magadhan imperialism. Mahapadma's Buddhist name, Ugrasena, signifies the 'master of a terrible army', and according to one commentator, the name Mahapadma itself denotes 'the lord of an infinite host.' No estimates for his own reign are available, but some idea of the forces at his command may be gained from the fact that at the time of Alexander's invasion the Nanda army numbered, according to Curtius, 200000 infantry, 20000 cavalry, 2000 four-horsed chariots and 3000 elephants--the highest figures known in India till then. According to other classical writers, the number of elephants was 4000 or 6000. It was on the political and military ground prepared by the remarkable Mahapadma that Chandragupta Maurya raised the superstructure of his Indian Empire. If, as is highly probable, he is identical with Nandaraja mentioned in the Hathigumpha Inscription, then be must have been a conscientious sovereign, not unmindful of the good of his people.

But his dynasty did not remain long in power after him. There were eight later Nandas—all sons of the first Nanda according to the early Brahmanical tradition though the Buddhits represent them as his brothers—who are supposed to have reigned successively and enjoyed very short rules, the total duration being given as twelve years in the Puranas. The Nandas ruled in Magadha at the critical period when the legions of Alexander burst the gates of the country and advanced to overrun the Punjab to the Beas, and it is possible, as contended by some, that the fear of their great army was an important factor in the mutiny that compelled Alexander to retrace his steps from the river. The reigning king at the time was Agrammes or Xandrames, one of the successors of Mahapadma.We have no clear knowledge of the part played by him in those troubled days of 326-5 B. C. He has been both condemed for not assisting the princes and peoples of the north-west in their fight against the aggressor and praised for his sagacity in not

tempting the fury of Alexander. He must be regarded as lucky to have escaped the onslaught of the Macedonian king for a conflict of the Magadhan armies with the Alexandrian forces was bound to be a terrible one, though it will be futile to speculate about its possible outcome. But the evil day of the Nandas was not long in coming. Within a few years of the Macedonian invasion, the House of Nanda succumbed to the challenge of Chandragrupta of the Maurya family who had the co-operation of the celebrated Brahmana diplomat, Kautilya, in the great political drama. The name of the last Nanda is given as Dhana Nanda in the Buddhist works, which is apparently only a nick-name. Though he is generally identified with Agrammes the confused state of early Magadhan chronology makes it difficult to be certain on the point. If the Jaina date for the overthrow of Nanda and the accession of Chandragupta Maurya, 313 B. C., be correct, it will perhaps be necessary to dissociate the two from one another. The view of some that Agrammes is Mahapadma-Ugrasena himself seems to be a mistaken one.[13]

The success of Chandragupta was, in some measure, due to the weakness of the Nanda regime itself. The Nanda kings possessed formidable military resources and a large empire, but they had not acquired the strength of popularity which alone could have stabilised the basis of their rule. From the beginning they had probably to reckon with a conservative reaction in Magadha frowning at the assumption of royal dignity by them. We read in the *Parisishtaparvan* that certain feudal chiefs declined to do obeisance to Nanda as he was the son of a barber and the chagrin of a priestly author at the rise of the 'lowly', and probably unorthodox, Nandas has found vent in the epithet *adharmika* (irreligious) that he applies to them in the Puranas. In c. 326 B. C., some prominent Indians informed Alexander and his companions that the contemporary Nanda emperor, Agrammes, did not command the respect of his subjects who held him cheap because of his 'mean' extraction. The resentment due to the 'disreputable' origin was further intensified by the oppressive financial policy the last of the Nandas, if not the entire dynasty as a rule,

seems to have pursued. The wealth of the Nandas is famous in Indian legend. An early Tamil poem relates how this wealth 'having first accumulated in Patali, hid itself in the flood of the Ganges'. The *Kathasaritsagara* refers to 990 million pieces of gold possessed by Nanda and the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, also speaks of 'King Nanda's five treasures of seven precious stones. Such traditional accounts of the immense riches of the Nandas seem to imply excessive taxes and exactions. The last prince of the family whose Buddhist name, Dhana Nanda, is itself eloquent, is expressly dubbed as *artharuchi* in the Mudrarakshasa and a late Buddhist tradition asserts that he levied taxes, among other things, even on skins, gums and stones, amassing a fortune of more than eighty crores by such undesirable means. If he is identical with Agrammes he may have made himself disagreeable to his people in some other ways also. The classical writers report, on the authority of Indian informants, that he was a 'man of quite worthless character', not conducting himself properly 'like the occupant of a throne.' According to Plutarch, Chandragupta's own estimate of him was that he was of a 'wicked disposition.' Thus, weakend by the antipathy of the people, the Nanda regime in the time of Dhana Nanda resembled an imposing superstructure resting on an infirm basis and yielded to the pressure of Chandragupta's onslaught. Unpopularity has been the fatal bane of many a powerful ruling dynasty.

E. THE TRIUMPH OF MAGADHA

Starting its upward career as an obscure principality of South Bihar, Magadha became the nerve-centre of a great unifying process and, in the course of about two hundred years, rose to be the foremost power of India. To a large extent, its steady rise to political greatness seems to have been due to the personal eminence of its kings and statesmen during the period in question. A monarchy with its destiny in the hands of rulers like Bimbisara, Ajatasatru, Sisunaga and Mahapadma Nanda and served by ministers like Vassakara and Sunitha and princes like Abhayarajakumara was bound to prosper in the comparison of Kosala and other rival kingdoms whose annals appear singularly devoid of great personalities after the generation of

giants in the second half of the 6th century B. C. The enthusiastic efforts of the Magadhan chiefs and their associates were greatly strengthened by other factors. The ample natural resources of Magadha—its richness in copper and iron ore, its superbly fertile soil, its extensive forests abounding in elephants which formed an important part of the army in the ancient days, its navigable rivers and its position in the centre of the Gangetic plain enabling it to exploit fully the trade passing along the great river route between Upper India and the ports on the Bay of Bengal—no doubt made it much better fitted economically to bear the strain of a protracted imperial struggle than the other monarchies. Its man-power made possible the formation of large armies like the one that Mahapadma and his successors could put into the field. In the initial stages, considerable political advantage accrued to it from its geographical position. Situated in the eastern part of the country, in the neighbourhood of small kingdoms and tribal republics, it was not seriously hampered in the development of its internal resources and military power and found it easy to enlarge its pale by conquest. The western kingdoms, on the other hand, were matched against each other, so to say, and had to spend a good part of their energy in maintaining the balance of power. The political advancement of Magadha probably owed something to its social conditions also. "A characteristic of the people of Magadha was an elasticity of social behaviour which was absent in the system which developed on the banks of the Sarasvati and the Drishadvati. In their country Brahmanas could associate with Vratyas, the Rajanya could admit Sudra girls to the harem, the Vaisya and even the Yavana could be promoted to gubernatorial office, hereditary rulers of aristocratic lineage could be expelled to make room for the offspring of a *nagara-sobhini* and the 'royal throne of kings' was not beyond the reach of a barber." This comparative freedom from the shackles of caste and tradition enabled the Magadhans to retain their native vigour of character to a larger extent than the people of the more westerly regions and thus to assume the leadership of the centripetal movement in the country.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Angutara Nikaya, IV, 252, 256, 260 (P. T. S.). Since the tradition of sixteen Mahajanapadas is known to both early Buddhist and Jaina texts, it can hardly be merely a product of gradual accretion as is supposed by an eminent authority (Thomas, The Life of Budaha, pp. 113-4) and must be taken to represent the actual political condition of India at a certain period of her history. A clue to this period is provided by the list of the Mahajanapadas itself. The sixteen states evidently flourished together before c. 550 B. C. when one of them, Kasi, is known to have lost its independence and merged into Kosala. On the other hand, the Vajji Republic could have been founded only after the fall of the Videhan monarchy of which the most probable date is about the beginning of the sixth century B. C. (PHAI,[6] p. 95). In the Jatakas allusions to the Vajjis and Mallas occur in the introductory portions but never in the gathas themselves which are supposed to contain material from the seventh century. The period of the sixteen Mahajanapadas may therefore be taken to correspond roughly to the first half of the sixth century (CL, I, 1918).

The Jaina list of the Mahajanapadas occurring in the Bhagavati Sutra (Sayo XV, Uddesa 1) gives the following names : Anga, Banga, Magaha, Malaya, Malwa,, Achchha, Vachchha, Kochchha, Padha, Ladha, Bajji, Mali, Kasi, Kosala, Avaha and Sambhuttara. The 'extended geographical horizon' of this list as evidenced by the inclusion of Kochchha, Malaya, Sambhuttara etc. clearly suggests that i was compiled at a date much posterior to the time when the Anguttara list was drawn up. The Anguttara, therefore, may be taken to preserve the authentic tradition about the Mahajanapadas.

2. PHAI,[6] p. 193. Tradition asserts that he married Padmavati, the sister of King Darsaka of Magadha and also a daughter of King Dridhavaman of Anga.

3. Equally unrelible is perhaps the story found in some late Jaina text of his war with Bimbisara of Magadha in which he is said to have been frustrated and actualy imprisoned by the cunning of prince Abhaya.

4. According to the Buddhacharita of Asvaghosha, the family to which Srenya, i.e. Bimbisara belonged was known as Haryanka-kula. As suggested by Dr. Bhandarkar, it was probably a family of Naga origin as the name of its last member, Nagadasaka, may indicate. The very appellation Haryanka-kula seems to be an equivalent of 'Nagalanchhana kula,' i.e., a family with a 'snake-crest.' The Therigatha gives 'Pandaraketu' as an epithet of Bimbisara. This is probably an allusion to a supposed relationship of his dynasty with the celebrated Naga king Pandara. That the Nagas were emerging into prominence about this time may be gathered from the accounts of the activities of their chief like Dhataratha in the Jatakas.

5. The reign of Bimbisara came to an end 8 years before the Parinirvana of the Buddha (483 B.C.) As the Ceylonese chronicles assign to him a reign of 52 years, his accession may be dated in (483 = 8 = 52) = 544-3 B. C. It is not improbable that the Nirvann Era of Ceylon (which places th edeath of the Buddha in 544-3 B.)

originally started with the accession of Bimbisara, an important event in the history of Magadha and was 'later confounded with the era of the Great Decease' (PHAI6, P. 227).

According to the Mahavamsa (trans. Geiger, p. 12), Bimbisara was anointed king by his father at the early age of f fteen. This disposes of the view of Dr. Bhandarkar that he began his career as a general of the Vajjis who ruled in Magadha at this time and was the first member of his family to acquire the kingly dignity which he did by driving his masters out. The Suttanipata passage describing Vaisali as 'Magadham puram', on which Bhandarkar's theory of Vajjian rule in Magadha is chiefly based, probably refers not to about the middle of the sixth century B. C. when Bimbisara commenced his reign but to the period of Ajatasatru or afterwards when Vaisali had really become a 'city of Magadha'.

6. There is no unanimity of traditions about the cause of the war with the Vajjis or Lichchhavis. According to the Jaina sources it was the refusal of Chetaka, the President of the Lichchhavis, to send back the princes Halla and Vehalla, sons of Chellana, who had fled to him with the Magadhan state elephant and a precious string of pearls. The Buddhist works, on the other hand, trace the origin of the quarrel to a breach of trust on the part of the Vajjis in respect of a mine of gems (or some precious substance) over which they enjoyed equal rights with Ajatasatru. There can be no doubt that the real point is missed in these stories. It was the vaulting imperial ambition of Ajatasatru that led him to attack the Vajjis.

7. Neither the Vajjis nor the Mallas were, however, wiped out of existence as political entities. They survived as autonomous units subordinate to the kings of Magadha, and in the Arthastra of Kautilya both of them are mentioned as 'rajasabdopajivisanghas'. The Vajjis (Lichchhavis) later figured prominently in Northern India when their alliance enabled Chandragupta I to lay the foundations of the mighty empire of the Guptas about the beginning of the 4th century A. D.

8. The Puranas place Darsaka between Ajatasatru and Udayin, but the Buddhist tradition is evidently more reliable on the point. Darsaka is probably identical with Nagadasaka, a later king of the dynasty, wrongly assigned to this period by the Puranas (CL, I, 1918).

9. The foundation of Pataliputra (Kusumapura) in the time of Udayin is specifically mentioned by the Gargi Samhita and the Vayu Purana. The latter authority assigns the great event to the fourth year of the king's reign. The tradition is also supported by the Parisishtaparvan of Hemachandra.

10. The circumstances leading to the accession of Sisunaga are really obscure. The Simhalese Chronicles ever that all the kings from Ajatasatru to Nagadasaka were parricides. So the people rose in anger, and driving Nagadasaka out, voted *amatya* Sisunaga, 'who had been proved worthy' to the throne. V. Smith points out that a long series of murders for succession is not without a parallel elsewhere. Three successive rulers of Parthia, Orodes, Phraates IV and Phraates V, are known to have killed their predecessors (EHI4, p. 36, n. 2). But in the absence of corroborative evidence it is difficult to accept the

charge against the Bimbisarids as true. The statement that the people, 'meeting in assembly, mindful of the good of all,' conferred sovereignty on Sisunaga is also hard to credit. All that one will perhaps be justified in inferring from the tradition is that the last of the Bimbisarids was a weak and unpopular ruler and was overthrown by Sisunaga with the tacit assent of the people. As pointed out in the text, the name-ending —naga and the fact that he seems to have held the high office of the governor of Kasi may suggest that the new king was not unrelated to the Haryanka-Naga family. The Mahavamsatika represents him as the son of a Lichchhavi raja by a nagarasobhini of Vaisali but the story bears the clear stamp of fabrication. The erroneous nature of the Puranic tradition making Sisunaga the progenitor of the family to which Bimbisara belonged has been amply demonstrated by Dr. H. C. Raychaudhury, PHAI,[6] pp. 115-16.

11. Dr. Bhandarkar opines that Sisunaga probably conquered Kosala also. But there is no positive evidence in support of this view. The fact that Sisunaga ruled in Kasi does not necessitate the conclusion that he held sway over Kosala. The joint kingdom of Kosala-Kasi simply did not exist in the time of Sisunaga. Kasi had become an integral part of Magadha in the reign of Ajatasatru.

12. There seems a fair agreement that the Nandas were a 'low caste' dynasty. Some writers, however, assign a high origin to them. Thus, in the Mudrarakshasa we find the minister Rakshasa describing the Nanda king overthrown by Chandragupta as 'abhijana' and Dhundhiraja also speaks of neither the father nor the mother of the Nandas as of low extraction. Hemachandra seems to contradict himself when he refers to the daughter of Nanda as a Kshatriya princess. By Kshatriya, however, he may have meant only a king.

13. Pt. K. Chattopadhyaya opines that Agrammes was Mahapadma—Ugrasena himself (PIHC, Lahore). His contention has been effectively disposed of by Dr. H. C. Raychaudhri (Age of the Nandas and Mauryas, p. 14). While Agrammes was the son of a father who had already 'usurped the supreme power' the first Nanda was only the offspring of a barber by a courtesan whose father did not wield the soverign power, in the Jain tradition. In the Budhist sources also, Ugrasena himself, and not his father, is said to have been the author of the kingly diginty of the Nandas. Most scholars take Agrammes as a patronymic and equate it with Augrasainya, i.e. son of Ugrasena Panditji contends that when the Greek companions of Alexander would inquire about the name of the reigning sovereign of Magadha, they would be told the personal name and not the patronymic and so Agrammes must be Ugrasena. But the argument loses much of its force when we remember that the Greek writers do not appear to have been very particular about personal names of kings. In many cases they have referred to Indian kings only by their tribal names or even place-name, e.g. Peucalaos, Taxiles, Moeries, etc. Moreover, names like Sophagasenus, recorded by the Greeks suggest that the Indian name Ugrasena would probably not be rendered as Agrammes by them. Even if we suppose that the Nanda dynasty came to an end in 313 B. C., as the Jaina books would require us to believe, it is not necessary to hold that in 326-5 B. C., Mahapadma-Ugrasena was on the throne. The short period of 12 years only assigned to the eight later Nandas is obviously ther esult of confused tradition.

CHAPTER II

The foreign Occupation of North-Western India

In the pre-Mauryan epoch the sway of the Magadhan kings did not extend to the north-west. While the other parts of Northern India were gradually succumbing to the irresistible might of the empire-builders of Rajagriha and Pataliputra, events o a different nature were taking place in the Uttarapatha (North Western India). The Punjab and Sind, along with the adjacent borderland, were detached from the Indian political system and became parts of mighty imperial fabrics whose centres lay in alien lands. Two great waves of invasion swept over them before the bifurcated stream of Indian history could be re-united to give rise to the comprehensive empire of the Mauryas. The first to come were the Achaemenians of Persia.

A THE PERSIANS IN INDIA

When, in the period about the middle of the sixth century B.C., Kurusha or Cyrus, the 'romantic' founder of the greatness of the Achaemenian dynasty of Persia, was gradually welding the wide regions from Central Asia to Hellespont into one political unit, conditions in India were highly favourable for foregin invaders. The north-western districts comprising the Indus basin suffered from the utter lack of unity and were split up into a multitude of petty, warring states. A few of these, notably Gandhara, Kamboja and Madra, were more important than the others, but their resources were not adequate enough to enable them to hold the gates of the country against external aggression. The leading powers of the interior, the kings of Kosala, Vatsa, Avanti and Magadha, were too fully engrossed with their own problems and rivalries to pay any heed to developments elsewhere. This distracted condition of the land naturally drew the attention of Cyrus (558-530 B.C.) and led him to form the design of aggrandisement. We have it on the authority of Nearchus that he fitted out an expedition to invade 'India.' The loose way in

which the early western writers used the word 'India' makes it difficult to decide if he wished merely to reduce the Indus region (or some parts of it) or he had plans for more extensive conquests in the country, and the trustworthiness of the story itself has been questioned. Fortunately the uncertainty is not a particularly annoying one, for the expedition, assuming that it did set out, was abandoned before reaching India. Arrian says that it came to grief in the attempt to cross the Gedrosian desert (Makran-Baluchistan desert) and Cyrus, barely able to escape with seven men only, had to give up the project. There is, however, reason to believe that the Persian monarch succeeded in establishing his authority over a good part of the borderland to the west of the Indus. Pliny notes that he allowed his armies to sack the town of Kapisi situated in the Upper Kabul Valley, near the foot-hills of the Hindukush. 'The district to the west of the Indus as far as the river Cophen (Kabul),' *i.e.*, Western Gandhara in the lower Kabul Valley, was inhabited at this time by Indian tribes known as Astakenian (Ashtaka) and Assacenian (Asvaka). According to Arrian, these submitted to the Persians and paid tribute to Cyrus as the master of their land. Taken by themselves these statements would probably not be positive proof and doubts have been raised by some writers about their veracity, but the conquest of a good part of the border country, including Gandhara, by the king seems to be borne out by the testimony of the Behistun Inscription of his alternate successor, Darius I, also.[1] This celebrated epigraph gives a long list of the possessions of Darius I, most of which were apparently added to the Persian Empire by Cyrus, and among these figure the names of Gadara (Gandhara), Harakhvati (Arachosia-Kandahar) and Maka (Makaran). Notwithstanding his failure to plant the Achaemenian banner on the soil of India proper, Cyrus thus brought the power of the Persian Empire within a measurable distance of the country and opened up the way for further conquests. Already some Indians had come under his rule and Xenophon may be right in saying that he reduced 'the Bactrians and Indians'.

Prof. Herzfeld opines that a part of the Punjab to the east of

Heracles, 'India' had never been conquered by any one before the Macedonians. It is argued that as both these writers often take the Indus as the western boundary of India, the Persian Empire probably did not extend beyond that river even when a the height of its glory. It is, however, difficult to locate an obviously prosperous and extensive satrapy like 'India' exclusively in the country to the west of the Indus of which the different parts (*e.g.*, Gandhara and Arachosia-Kandhar) are known to have been included in other provinces. Alexander's historians, from whom Megasthenes and Arrian apparently derived their information, may have been 'inclined to minimise the accomplishments of the Persians in order to bring into greater prominence the achievements of the famous Greek invader.'

The campaign of Darius resulting in the annexation of Hidu (Hindu) was probably undertaken before c. 515 B.C[3]. and led to the overthrow of the *Mahajanapada* of Gandhara (eastern part) and other important kingdoms of the north-west, such as Madra in the Punjab and Roruka in Sind. His son and successor, Xerxes, retained hold of the Indian possessions and utilised their resources in the war against Greece which was the main event of his reign (485-465 B.C.). We learn from Herodotus that in the great army he mustered to invade Hellas, soldiers both from Gandhara and 'India' were present. These marched to battle in their distinctive attire and equipment and by their courage and good fighting qualities produced a deep impression in the west. Some of them took an active part in the battle of Thermopylae. Incidentally, they were the first Indians of recorded history to visit Europe.

Apart from Herodotus, the evidence for the retention of the Indian provinces by Xerxes comes from a Persepolis inscription of his time describing Gandhara and Hindu as subject territories as in the inscriptions of Darius. The epigraph throws an interesting sidelight on the religious policy of Xerxes. In his zeal for the official religion of Persia, the emperor is said to have 'sapped the foundations' of Daiva temples and 'ordained that 'Daivas shall not be worshipped.' The ordinance probably affected 'India' also, but evidently made little tangible impression on

the religious set-up of the country. The intolerance of Xerxes presents a strong contrast to the wise policy of Cyrus who 'treated the deities of the conquered peoples with great respect and assisted in the maintenance of their religious institutions'.

The failure of his plans in Greece put an end to the warlike activities of Xerxes. It is said that he never afterwards left his capitals on a campaign and was finally murdered in his palace. After his death, the power of the Achaemenians began to decline, imperceptibly at first but rapidly later. Revolts of provincial satraps, palace intrigues, active discontent in Egypt, incompetent administration and the hostility of the Greeks soon creaed a situation in which a further growth of the empire was out of question and decay was bound to set in. The Achaemenian position must have been affected in the east also, but it appears that the Persians succeeded in retaining their control over some Indians upto the last, *i.e.* upto the time of Alexander's invasion. For the reigns of Artaxerxes I (465-425 B.C.) and Darius II (425-408 B.C.) we have no positive evidence; the view of some that the list of the tribute-bearing satrapies given by Herodotus may be true of his own time which corresponds to that of Artaxerxes I is hardly acceptable. But about the next emperor, Artaxerxes II (408-358 B.C.), his court physician, the Greek Ktesias, informs us in the available frequents of his *Indica* that he received rich presents from India including a rare fragrant oil, the dung of the *iakon* bird which caused painless death and a purple dye produced by crushing certain insects. To his reign probably belongs an inscription, mentioning Hindu and Gandhara in the old familiar way, engraved on the South Tomb at Persepolis, though some think of Artaxerxes I in this connection.

It is not clearly known if 'Hindu' under Artaxerxes II embraced the entire territory comprised in it in the earlier days. Most probably it did not. The eastern regions could hardly have remained unaffected so long by the shock of the disturbances which had beset the empire in the west. In any case, before the final blow was dealt by Alexander in 331 B. C., the limits of the Persian authority had contracted in the east and the frontier

had receded to the Indus· Strabo tells us that the riverc onstituted the boundary between India and Ariana which latter was siituated next to India to the west and was subject the Persians at the time. The overthrow of Persian rule in the greater parts of the Punjab and Sind was obiously due to the revolts of the local ruling families to which belonged Alexander's contemporaries like Ambhi and Porus and also of the numerous tribes of the region that later fought the Macedonians.[3]

In 331 B. C., in response to the call of Darius III, the last of the Achaemenians, the Indians suppled him with three contnigents of warriors to resist the aggression of Alexander In the momentous battle of Gaugamela, one of these groups,comprising 'Indians who were neighbours of the Bactrians' (*i.e.*, natives of the Kabul Valley), fought under Bessus, the governor of Bactria. The second detachment was made up of 'mountaineer Indians' arrayed with the soldiers of Arachosia (Kandhar) under the satrap of that province. The third troop consisting of soldiers 'who lived this side of the Indus' had come to the aid of the Persian monarch with a small force of fifteen elephants. These details furnished by Arrian probably confirm the statement of Strabo that at this time Persian sway had become confined to the west of the Indus ; none of the contingents appears to have come from the other side of the river.[4]

The battle of Gaugamela shattered the frame of the Achaemeinan empire beyond the hope of recovery. But this was not the final end of the Persian domination of the Indian borderland. The disposition of the Indian troops at Gaugamela probably implies that the territories of some Indians had been placed under the Bactrian and Arachosian satraps, Bessus and Bersaentes respectively, who still defied Alexander and held on to their charges. There were probably Indians in Gedrosia also of which the Persian governor likewise had not submitted. But it did not take Alexander long to overcome the resistance in Eastern Iran. Having subjugated Aria (Herat) be turned to Drangiana which was a part of the Arachosian satrapy. Bersaentes fled to the Indians in the eastern part of the province, but these handed

him back to Alexander, perhaps as a token of submission. The Macedonian king had the unfortunate satrap executed and then proceeded to Arachosia itself where he founded the town of Alexandria-among-the-Arachosians, possibly modern Ghazani. Gedrosia also submitted now, and, crossing the snow-covered mountains of Southern Afghanistan, Alexander soon emerged into the upper part of the Kabul Valley where another city, Alexandria-under-the-Caucasus, was established near the confluence of the Ghorband and Panjshir rivers. He was now master of the eastern regions of the Persian Empire also and of the Indians living there. Some isolated Indian communities of Gedrosia and Arachosia were still outside the pale of his authority and there was a considerable tract to the west of the Indus, the lower Kabul Valley, where the Indian tribes were still unsbdued. But it was not Alexander's purpose to proceed against these immediately. His next move was to cross the Hindukush into Bactria. Here Bessus even now held the banner of defiance aloft and called himself Great King.

The Persian rule lasted, in some form or other, in India and the adjacent broderland for about 200 years. Politically, it never became an important factor in the country. It affected only the north-western regions and exerted no influence on the main developments at this time taking place in the plains of North India. But in other fields it produced some notable consequences. By making Sind and the Punjab parts of the same political fabric which also included Egypt and the countries of Western and Central Asia, it did much to remove the age-old isolation between India and the outside world and opened up a brisk intercourse between the two. While Indian soldiers were now frequently summoned to take part in the conflicts of Western Asia and at least on one occasion fought in Europe, Indian philoshopers and scholars sought to acquaint themselves with the learning of the west and before 400 B. C. an Indian is said to have met Socrates in Athens. On the other hand, Greeks like Skylax and his companions paid personal visits to India and others, such as Herodotus and Ktesias, collected information about her to incorpo-

rate in their works. A fair ground was thus prepared for the traffic of ideas and cultural forms between the hitherto closed world of India and the other centres of civilisation in the west.

The removal of political barriers gave a fillip to the external trade of India. The Persian emperors paid great attention to the security and development of the means of communication in their empire and India was obviously benefited by this wholesome policy. To the squadron of Skylax *probably* goes the credit of discovering a new and easy sea-route from India to the west. It will perhaps be too much to suppose that the three or four principal overland trade routes connecting India with the outside world were all opened during this period but there is little doubt that the condition of security brought about by the foundation of the Persian Empire led to a great augmentation of the volume of trade passing along them. If the Persians drained 'India' of a large amount annually by way of tribute, and occasionally forced the subject peoples to fight for them in the western wars, they compensated to a large extent for these inconveniences by promoting commercial contact with the west which became subsequently a source of considerable prosperity for India and lasted for more than a thousand years. According to one high authority, the town of Takshasila (Taxila), the political and commercial metropolis of the north-west during the greater part of the ancient period, may itself have been founded in the time of Darius. Some writers have advanced the view that the beginning of cionage in India was due to the direct influence of the *sigloi*, the silver coinage of the Achaemenian Empire, but their view has been rejected by most others.

A tangible result of the Persian domination was the evolution of the Kharoshthi alphabet. It is generally recognised that Kharoshthi grew out of Aramaic which was probably the official script of the Persian provinces in India. It would appear that Aramaic itself became popular with some sections of the people with the result that the emperor Asoka ordered one version of his edicts to be engraved in that script. The Indian language or languages of the north-west also imbib-

ed some Persian influence and words like '*dipi*' and '*nipishta*' began to be used in the country.

The influence of Achaemenian Persia can be traced in some aspects of Indian history and culture in the Maurya and subsequent periods. We need not suppose that the imperial ambition of the Mauryas and their predecessors in Magadha was inspired by the Persain example, as some writers are inclined to hold, but there is little doubt that the Mauryas made conscious efforts to reproduce the pomp and grandeur of the Achaemenians in India and succeeded to a large extent. Chandragupta Maurya copied the Persian royal ceremonial of washing his hair in the court and the administrative structure devised by him for his empire may have been influenced to some extent by the Persian model. The imperial palace of the Mauryas at Pataliputra displayed some features which appear to have been the result of borrowing from Persia. Chandragupta's illustrious grandson, Asoka, adopted the Achaemenian practice of having inscriptions engraved on stone though he harnessed it to an altogether different purpose[19], and the official Mauryan art of his time bears the unmistakable impress of Persia, specially in the 'Persepolitan Capital' and the lustrous polish of the columns. The Achaemenian system of satrapal government was subsequently popularised in India by the Sakas and Kushanas and the exaltation of monarchy in the country, reflected in the assumption of such high titles as *Maharajadhiraja*, *Paramadaivata*, *Paramabhattaraka* etc. by kings and chiefs, may also be in the final analysis due to the infiltration of the influence of Persia where royal epithets like 'king of kings'(Kshayathiya Kshayathiyanam) were in vogue since the Achaemenian days. Indian architecture of the post-Mauryan period is said to have absorbed some Persian elements, e. g., the Achaemenian fire-niche.

B. ALEXANDER IN INDIA

Alexander reduced Bactria and Sogdiana as far as the Jaxartes by a hurricane campaign and then turned south again. He reportedly declined an offer by a certain Pharasmenes to guide him to the Euxine as he now wanted to subjugate the Indians.

This, he declared, would make him 'the master of all Asia'. By Asia he probably meant the empire of Darius I and it is possible that at this stage he had only the Indian satrapy of that empire in mind. That he later wished to proceed beyond the farthest eastern limit of the Achaemenian Empire does not alter the case. He is known to have revised and enlarged his original plans more than once.

Already he was coming into direct touch with Indian rulers and their politics. While still in the country to the north of the Oxus, he received an embassy from Omphis (Ambhi) of Taxila, offering him the friendship of the Indian king and praying for assistance against Porus, the powerful eastern neighbour of Taxila. Another Indian chief, Sissikottus (Sasigupta), who had fought the Macedonians under Bessus, also approached the conqueror about this time and was accepted in his service. From these and other Indian associates Alexander must have received encouraging reports about the political and military situation in their country. India was not without a great power. The Nanda Empire of Magadha extended from the neighbourhood of the Jamuna to Bengal and Orissa in the east and the Godavari in the south, if not to Kuntala further beyond. Its military resources were formidable. But the sovereign at its head was an unpopular one, despised by his subjects because of his 'low' birth and tyrannical disposition, and his authority, in any case, was not acknowledged in the north-west which provided a bright prospect of easy victory. The superimposed rule of the Achaemenians had made little impression on Sind and the Punjab and its withdrawal had left them in a state of political chaos. Of the more than two dozen states into which they were fragmented, some were tribal and republican, others monarchical and hereditary and yet others which were a mixture of the two types. Only a few of them, *e.g.* the kingdom of Taxila between the Indus and Jhelum, the Paurava territory lying to the east of Jhelum and the principality of Abhisara comprising the Salt Range and the adjoining regions were of any considerable note and their weakness was further accentuated by the state of perpetual jealousy and warfare

existing between many of them. The king of Taxila was at daggers drawn with Porus and Abhisara. There was little love lost between Porus and his nephew whose kingdom was situated to the east of the Chenab. Porus and the king of Abhisara were enemies of the Kshudrakas and the Malavas and on one occasion had actually invaded their land. Musicanus (Mousicanos) and Sambos, two adjacent chiefs of the lower Indus, were at war with each other. It is a distressing reflection that though the rumblings of the Persian wars must have reached the Indians 'and Alexander's intention to invade India must have been common knowledge in the country much before he actually set foot on its soil, the petty local jealousies were not shed and no serious attempts were made to present a united front to the aggressor. While garrisons were reinforced and the strength of the armies increased individually by many states quite a few princes also made preparations to receive Alexander in the hope of escaping the dangers of war and breaking the pride of rivals with his help. It was rare, as in the case of Abhisares (the king of Abhisara) who sent assistance to the garrison of Massaga and in that of the Kshudrakas and Malavas who put a large confederate army in the field, that the idea of combined resistance was seriously entertained by any one. The spirit of dissension was rampant in the Punjab and Sind and the Macedonians coul d not havechosen a better moment to strike.

It was, numerically, a by no means overwhelming host which invaded India. Plutarch requires us to believe that the Indian army of Alexeandar numbered 120,000 foot and 15,000 horse. This is evidently an overestimate and, according to the best authorities on the subject, the Macedeonians entered the country with a fighting force of 27,000 to 30,000 men only, maybe even less. In composition, the army was heterogeneous, being made up of Macedonians, Greeks, Phoenicians, Persians, Egyptians, Bactrians and Ceneral Asians. But its discipline was exemplary and its command was vested in the best hands. Hephaestion Ptolemy, Nearchus, Leonnatus and others were veterans of tested ability and unflinching loyaty and functioned as a team under the guidance of their great leader, himself the most outsanding military genius of the ancient world.

Having re-organised the troops for the impending expedition, Alexander crossed the Hindukush back into the Kabul Valley and proceeded to a place called Nicaea by the Greeks, evidently on the route to the river, by way of Alexanaria-under-the- Caucasus. Here the king of Taxila presented himself in person and the attempt on India began in the earnest. In pursuance of an excellent plan of campaign, the army was divided into two parts. One of these, under the charge of Hephaestion and Perdiccas, made straight for India along the Kabul River and the Khyber Pass to throw a bridge over the Indus for the passage of the united Greek army with orders to secure the submission of all the places on the way, by force if necessary. There was, however, only one occasion to use force when Astes, the king of the Astekenians (Ashtakas) of the Peucelaotis (Pushkalavati) region, tried to obstruct the passage of the column. The brave Indian chief held out for thirty days and fell fighting in the defence of his freedom. His city and kingdom were made over to Sanjaya, a partisan of the king of Taxila, and the victorious detachmeht arrived at the Indus to begin its appointed task. Alexander himself led the other column into the valleys of the northern tributaries of the Kabul with a view to securing his flank. Here, amid scenes of rugged natural beauty, stood a number of military strongholds defended by nature and man alike, and the warlike tribes of the region, probably just emancipated from the formal thraldom of the Persians, had already made preparations to resist the Macedonians. The first to face the invaders were the Aspasians of the Alishang-Kunar valley who gave a tough fight but were ultimately overwhelmed. The next target of Alexander was the state of Nysa situated close to the triple-peaked Koh-i-Mor. The capital city, governed by a council of 300 persons led by Akouphis, surrendered without a fight and was allowed to retain its liberty. The Nyseans are reported to have claimed descent from Dionysus and pointed out, as proof, that the ivy grew in their country. Their contention was taken seriously by some Greeks and ridiculed by others. The Goureans (Gauraians) who apparently lived along the river Gauri (Panjkora) then lost their freedom and Alex,

ander advanced to Masaga, the chief town of the Assakenians (Asvakas), a strong city said to have been defended by 20,000 cavalry, 3000 elephants, 30,000 infantry and a mercenary force of 7000 men. The defenders put up a gallant resistance. On the fourth day of the conflict, their king having fallen,the command of the troops was assumed by the queen and following her example the entire womanhood of the tribe took up arms in defence of the citadel. At last, however, the garrison was overpowered and the city capitulated. The mercenaries concluded a separate peace with Alexander, being allowed to leave the town on condition that they would take up service with the Macedonians. Unwilling to fulfil this part of the agreement, they made secret preparations to leave for their homes during the night but were forestalled by Alexander who butchered them to the last man—an act of wanton cruelty condemned even by Greek writers. After Massaga came the turn of smaller strongholds like Bazira and Ora which were easily taken. The reduction of the northern valleys thus complete, the conqueror descended along the Swat to Pushkalavati, the famous town already captured by Hephaestion and Perdiccas. The territory in the valleys was constituted into a province with Nicanor as the satrap and a garrison was planted at Pushkalavati under Philip.

Before Alexander could join the advance party on the Indus, he still had some fighting to do between that river and the Kabul. The detachment of Hephaestion, marching straight to India, had left many places unsubdued in this area and their reduction was 'a tactical necessity. The most important of these was Aornos, 'an extraordinary strong hill fortress, standing on a solitary rock about 7000 feet high.' The conquest of Aornos greatly exercised Alexander and has been described in detail by the Greek writers. With the help of some local guides, the Macedonians began a determined assault in which a prominent part was played by Ptolemy, the son of Lagos. Ultimately the fort fell, many of its defenders perishing by sword or falling down precipices. It was placed under the charge of Sissikottus (Sasigupta) with a body of soldiers to assit him.

Having thus fully secured the rear, Alexander reached

the bridge of boats constructed by Hephaestion and Perdiccas on the Indus near modern Ohind and here he made a considerable halt, about one month, before entering India proper. Then, in the spring of 326 B.C., he crossed the river and proceeded to Taxila. A grand welcome was accorded him by Ambhi with professions of surrendering himself and his realm—a formal acceptance of what had been a fact for some months now—and he was confirmed in the rule of his principality under conditions of vassalage. Calls went out to the neighbouring kings and chiefs to likewise acknowledge the suzerainty of the Macedonians and, in compliance, local rulers presented themselves at a grand Durbar, marked by the usual equestrian games and possibly a touch of colourful oriental ceremony. Even the king of Abhisara, who had assisted the defenders of Massaga and to whose realm the fugitives from Aornos had escaped, sent a representative though the Alexander-historians note that he was still treacherous at heart. But a different kind of reply reached Alexander, in response to his summons, from king Porus (Paurava) of the country between the Jhelum and the Chenab. 'I will meet the king', came the word from the Indian potentate of proud pedigree, 'but on my own frontiers and in arms'.

Alexander now made preparations for what proved to be his greatest encounter of arms in India. Having placed a garrison of Greek and Macedonian soldiers under the Thracian Eudamus at Taxila and having appointed Philip as the satrap there, evidently in supervisory control over Ambhi, he advanced to the Hydaspes (Jhelum), on the opposite bank of which the Paurava had already taken up his position, determined to prevent the crossing of the river by the foe. The story of the battle of Jhelum between Aldexander and Porus has been repeated too often to require a detailed description. Under cover of a dark stormy night, the Macedonians succeeded in eluding the vigilance of Porus and the greater part of the army crossed the river at a point some sixteen miles upstream. In the ensuing battle, the Macedonians took the field with 11,000 men but these were later on joined by their comrades who had not crossed the river

on the previous night. The strength of the army of Porus is estimated at 30,000 foot, 4000 cavalry, 3000 chariots and 2000 elephants. The Indian soldiers fought courageously well, but the verdict of the contest was to go against them. While the muddy state of the ground caused by the night's rain hampered the movement of their chariots and the same factor prevented the Indian archers from securing a firm rest for their long bows, the cavalry charges of the Macedonians went home with deadly effect and in the general stampede the Indian elephants, uncontrollable due to wounds and the loss of drivers, seem to have done more harm to their own people than to the foe. The Indian army was thrown into complete confusion and utterly routed. Porus fought to the last, but ultimately he too left the field bearing numerous wounds on his body. Alexander sent the king of Taxila after him to demand his surrender but 'the sight of the treacherous enemy infuriated the Paurava who hurled a javelin at him.' Alexander sent other envoys, including Meroes, a friend of Porus. The imperious Indian prince was at last persuaded to surrender and to present himself before Alexander. To Alexander's question as to how he wished to be treated, he made the famous reply: 'Treat me, O Alexander, as befits a king.'

The great battle on the Jhelum took a heavy toll of life. Arrian informs us that the casualties on the Indian side totalled 20,000 infantry and 3000 cavalry and 'all the chariots were broken to pieces.' These figures appear to be somewhat exaggerated and Diodorus estimates the number of the killed at 12,000 and that of the captured at 9000. About the losses of the Macedonians we have no clear information, but these were also evidently grave and the number of about 300 killed given by Arrian is doubtless a gross misrepresentation. To commemorate his triumph in the famous contest Alexander founded a town called Nicaea on its actual site and another named Bucephala after his faithful horse at the place where the army had crossed the Jhelum. Yet another memorial to the battle was provided by a type of coin which seems to represent Porus riding away on an elephant followed by a horseman.

The victor decided to reinstate the redoubtable opponent in the enjoyment of his original kingdom as also to secure his lasting friendship by giving him further extension of territory to the east. The Greek writers say that the Indian chief became a vassal, but the subordination imposed on him was less obvious than that of Ambhi and he seems to have been regarded more as an ally than a feudatory. Justin attributes this generous treatment solely to the respect Alexander felt for his valour. But it has rightly been argued that there must have been some more substantial reasons. The sanguinary encounter on the Jhelum had probably convinced the Macedonian king of the wisdom of a reconciliatory policy and it is possible that he 'planned to use the influence of Porus in his dealings with other Indian rulers'. The number of the imported troops available for active service had now thinned down considerably and willing assistance by a befriended native chief would be highly welcome. Alexander may further have felt that a hostile Porus, not altogether crippled by his defeat, would be an effective curb on Ambhi of Taxila, should the latter ever display refractory inclinations.

With Porus as their ally, the Macedonians next proceeded against the Glaussiai or Glauganikai (Skt. Glauchukayana ?). Their territories were conquered and made over to Porus. Disturbing news were received about this time. The satrap Nicanor had been killed by the Assakenians and Sasigupta, the commander of the garrison at Aornos, was sending urgent calls for help. On the instruction of Alexander, Tyriespes and Philip, the satraps of Alexandria-under-the-Caucasus and Taxila respectively, proceeded to pacify the recalcitrant people and the arrival of the Thracian reinforcements from Iran enabled the conqueror to continue his advance to the east. He crossed the Akesines (Chenab) and invaded the realm of the Junior Porus (Bad Porus as the Greeks call him) who abandoned the kingdom rather than to surrender to the enemy. There was no further opposition upto the Hydroates (Ravi) and the entire country upto that river was added to the domain of Porus.

Crossing the Ravi, Alexander easily secured the submission of Pimprama, the chief town of the Adraistai, but the reduc-

tion of Sangala, the stronghold of the Kathains (Kathas), proved a far more difficult matter. The Kathas enjoyed high reputation as soldiers and fought with great tenacity. When the town at last fell to Alexander and was completely sacked by his soldiers the defenders registered 17,000 killed and 70,000 captured and the losses of the Macedonians were also severe. About this time or soon afterwards, an Indian raja called Phegelas (Bhagala) also offered submission to the Macedonian king who now arrived on the banks of the Hyphasis (Beas).

At that river, his advance was cut short. Already on the border of Inner India, he was not destined to enter it, for the army now mutinied and refuesd to go further. The troops were homesick, weary and disheartened by the losses and hardships they had suffered. 'The heat and the rain had told heavily on them and they had been shaken by the severe fighting at the Jhelum and at Sangala.' Vague rumour painted depressing pictures of dangers beyond the Beas—deserts, impetuous rivers, forbidding jungles and powerful peoples with elephants bigger and more numerous than those of Porus. The soldiers had heard of the formidable fighting force of Agrammes, the king of the Prasii, and had little desire to encounter it. They remained impervious to the exhortation of Alexander to advance and 'only cried and lamented silently' when he threatened to proceced without them to brave the perils of the unconquered land. Their attitude did not change even when the king retired into his camp and remained shut up for three days—an expedient which served him well on some other occasions. Seeing the impossibility of moving them he gave the orders for the return with a sad heart. Twelve colossal altars, dedicated to Greek gods, were erected on the bank of the river to mark the farthest point of advance into India. Legend asserts that afterwards Chandragupta Maurya used to worship at these altars.

What was the plan of Alexander when he urged his reluctant followers to go beyond the Beas? Even the Alexander-story is not sufficienly well preserved to warrant a definite answer. Some sources ascribe to him the intention of conquer-

ing Magadha, but so high an authority as Prof. Tarn calls this a 'later legend' and, considering the fact that the conqueror had now only a reduced force at his command and was already using Porus' troops for garrisoning, it may well seem doubtful if he had a conflict with Magadha in view: On the other hand, what was it he had in mind if not that ? Tarn's assumption that his eagerness to advance was due to a mistaken supposition that the Ocean was only 'a small way off, is hardly convincing; it is incredible that at the Beas he was so thoroughly ignorant of the geography of India. Only a short stretch of territory now separated him from the frontiers of the Nanda Empire and it is difficult to imagine that his overbearing anxiety was for the sake of the meagre glory of conquering the few tribes inhabiting it. Conversely, would the troops, who did not raise any serious objection to making a long detour through Sind and fighting many battles there on their way back, adopt such a determined mutinous attitude if their leader's programme across the Beas involved only a few disorganized people ? It is possible that in his daring and confidence Alexander was thinking of invading Magadha, a venture which the soldiers considered too hazardous, but opinion must be withheld. Some authorities represent him as actually advancing to the Ganges. This is surely a mistake and we can hardly credit a later Greek with much knowledge of history when he tells us that he saw memorials of Alexander's invasion in the regions about Kathiawar and Gujrat.

Commencing in September 326 B. C., the return march took the army for a distance along practically the same route it had taken forward until it reached the Hydaspes. Here, a great flotilla of boats, numbering about 800, had been kept in readiness. In the month of November the boats, carrying a part of the army, started moving down the river in an impressive procession, accompanied on both the banks by several divisions under the command of Hephaestion and Crateus. About the confluence of the Chenab and the Jhelum, a body of chosen soldiers was disembarked to invade the tribes of the Siboi (Sivi) and Agalassoi (Agraseni ?). The Sivis are repre.

sented as a wild people, who 'dressed themselves in the skins of wild beasts and had clubs for weapons'. They tendered submission to the invaders, but the Agraseni gave a tough fight and defended their town with an army of 40,000 foot and 3,000 horse. The battle took toll of many Macedonian lives. In retaliation, Alexander set the town on fire and killed or carted off into slavery the majority of its inhabitants.

The Macedonians then turned their arms against a formidable confederacy of tribes known as Malloi (Malava) and Oxydrakai (Kshudraka) occupying the territory below the confluence of the Jhelum and the Chenab. The combined army of these is said to have numbered 90,000 foot, 10,000 horse, and 900 chariots. The main brunt of the invasion seems to have been borne by the Malavas who offered resistance in all their towns and sustained heavy losses in dead and captured. In the attempt to seize the strongest of the towns, Alexander himself was seriously wounded and his enraged soldiers put all the inhabitants to the sword, including women and children. Greatly weakened by their losses the Malavas at last surrendered and were followed by the Kshudrakas. The authority of the satrap Philip was extended over their lands.

Further down the stream, other tribes called Abastanoi (Ambashtha ?), Xathroi (Kshatriya) and Ossadioi (Vasati) submitted without fight, though the first of these is represented to have collected a large army with the intention of resisting the enemy. Their territories were also evidently put under the charge of Philip whose satrapy thus now reached upto the junction of the Indus and the Chenab.

The last phase of the campaign, commencing at the beginning of 325 B. C., lay in the country of the lower Indus below the confluence of the Punjab rivers. Here Alexander first reduced the capital of a people called Sogdoi or Sordai (Sudra) and then advanced against Musicanus, a powerful chief of the region with his royal seat at Alor in the Sukkur District. The ruler in question had perhaps contemplated resistance, but being unnerved by the sudden arrival of the enemy he tendered sub-

mission and was allowed to retain his kindom in a subordinate capacity. Another chief, Sambos, ruling in a mountainous territory of the neighbourhood, deserted his capital Sindimana (identified by some with Sehwan, a city of the Indus) but later made peace with the invader. A large number of cities belonging to the Praestai (Prostha ?) were conquered from a king called Oxycanus (or Porticanus) and the chief was himself taken prisoner. The most determined opposition in the lower Indus Valley, however, was offered not by kings and chiefs, but by the Brahmanas who exerted great influence over the politics of the region. They preached a tirade of hatred against the foreigners and roused the spirit of defiance by declaring any act of hostility towards them as an act of merit (Dharma). On their instigation Musicanus and Oxycanus revolted against the Macedonians, but were overwhelmed and put to death along with the advisers. So spirited and efficacious was their (i.e. the Brahmanas') opposition that one of their cities had actually to be stormed and a large number of its inhabitants were massacred.

Alexander now reached the country of Patalene (the delta) with its capital at Pattala (or Tamala). The city had a constitution like that of Sparta, the command in war being vested in two hereditary kings of different houses while the sovereign authority in the state was wielded by a Council of Elders. At the approach of the invader the people deserted the capital and not a soul was to be seen in the streets or houses when the Greeks arrived in July 325 B. C.. But most of the fugitives soon returned and took up their wonted professions.

At Pattala, preparations were made for the final departure from the country. The army was divided into two parts, one of which was to journey by sea under the command of Nearchus from the mouth of the Indus to that of the Euphrates, while the other, led personally by Alexander, was to pass through the southern part of the Gedrosian desert (Makran) and Carmania. The land party was the first to leave. It began its trek in Sept. 325 B. C. and marching through the

country of the Arabitae and the Oritae (the latter of whom offered some resistance) reached Carmania, having suffered bitter hardships during the passage of the desert. The troops under the command of Nearchus embarked for home from 'Alexander's harbour' near Karachi about a month later.

Circumstances had compelled Alexander to off and on alter his original arrangements for the government of the Indian possessions. The final picture of the administrative set-up of 'Macedonian India' at the time of his depature may be noticed here. Peithon, the son of Agenor, was the satrap in charge of the lower Indus Valley (Sind) and his authority extended to the Hab in the west. In the Punjab Ambhi enjoyed his ancestral kingdom of Taxila, but over him was set in authority the Macedonian Philip, a relative to the royal family. Philip seems to have been the principal representative of Greek rule in India, exercising sway over the entire country as far as the confluence of the rivers and, in addition, over what had once been the satrapy of Gandhara (western) ruled by Nicanor. East of the Jhelum, Porus was prince and satrap in one and governed the whole of the Punjab to the Beas. On the northern fringes of his kingdom and those of Taxila, the chief of Abhisara stood in a somewhat ill-defined relation with the empire. His principality comprised the Salt Range region and the ruler of Ursa (Hazara) was probably his subordinate.

The civil authority was duly supported by an army of occupation distributed over the country in a number of local garrisons and strongholds. Troops under the command of veteran soldiers were stationed in places like Massaga, Aornos and Pushkalavati. A strong force of Greek and Macedonian soldiers was planted at Taxila under the leadership of the Thracian Eudamus. Besides, detachments must also have been placed in the new towns founded by Alexander in India and the neighbouring borderland. The conqueror established one Alexandria each in Aria (Herat), Arachosia (probably modern Ghazni), and in the Upper Kabul Vally near the foothills of the Caucasus (Hindukush), about the confluence of the Ghorband and Panjshir rivers. Of the known Alexandrias in India proper, one stood

on the west bank of the Jhelum and was called Nicaea, another, Alexandria-Bucaphala, was also situated on the Jhelum and a third one, Alexandria Iomousa, lay on the Chenab. Two more Alexandrias were ordered or begun, but it is doubtful if they were ever finished. Quays and harbours were constructed in the Indus delta to maintain contact with the central authority of the empire in the west.

These elaborate arrangements leave no doubt that it was Alexander's purpose to occupy the Indian possessions as integral parts of his empire and to perpetuate the Macedonian rule there. But the hope was doomed to disappointment. The invasion could not stabilise the Macedonian position and the Alexandrian conquest turned out to be only a brief interlude in the history of the north-west. From the first India spoke the language of hostility, not permitting' the alien government to take deep roots in her soil. Trouble sprang up in many centres before Alexander's own eyes. While he was still in the country, the Arachosians revolted under an Indian leader called Samaxus (or Damaraxus), the Asvakas killed the satrap Nicanor and the kings Musicanus and Oxycanus rebelled after submitting. As soon as his back was turned, the attitude of the local tribes of the sea-board of Sind became threatening and Nearchus had to embark sooner than the scheduled time. A hostile and restive 'India', with the garrisons affected by the internal jealousies of the Greek and Macedonian soldiers and at least two native chiefs in a position of high authority—such was the state of affairs when he left. He might have mended matters if he had lived to a normal age, but he died not long afterwards and the forces of disruption burst into full strength. Within two years his work was virtually undone in the purely Indian provinces of the Punjab and Sind and by 317 B.C. the last known Macedonian commander had withdrawn from the country ; the brief story of Macedonian occupation had been told and 'India' had reverted to the Indians. Alexander's empire disintegrated quickly but while in the other parts its legatees were European dynasts, in India it was succeeded by the indigenous family of the Mauryas.

The invasion cannot be shown to have made any direct

impresion on the life and culture of the region it affected. The language, literature, religion and general habits of the people remained alike uninfluenced. The success of Alexander's raid may have disclosed to the Indians the weakness of their military system and strategy, but the fashionable assumption that they profited from the lesson is not borne out by positive record. The satrapal system adopted by the Macedonians for the government of the Punjab and Sind was not taken over by the Mauryas and 'conservative India' and the Balkans were the only provinces of the empire of Alexander that did not accept his reformed coniage. Indian craftsmen soon began to make good imitations of the things used by Greek soldiers and athletes, but the supposition that it was from the Macedonians that the Indians got 'the impulse to build and carve in stone' is a gratuitous one. Indeed a mere military occupation, lasting about ten years or so on the outside, could hardly be expected to produce any remarkable consequences. The cities were, of course, there, with their European residents and some of them are known to have endured for a fairly long time. Asoka refers to the Greeks of the north-western frontier in his edicts. Alexandria-Bucaphala is mentioned by the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (1st. century A. D., and Alasanda, probably Alexandria-under-the-Caucasus, is named in the Milindapanho and the Mahavamsa. But, *if* it was a part of Alexander's purpose in founding the cities to diffuse Hellenism in India or even to produce a fusion of cultures, it may be doubted if his scheme ever had a chance of success. The Alexandrian cities became successful centres of radiation in some other regions, but there circumstances were more favourable. There the political backing of the cities continued for considerable periods, additions were made to their numbers by the successors of Alexander, specially the Seleucids, and more Europeans were imported to settle in them. In India, the early collapse of political support left them stranded, ineffectual as bases of propagation, surrounded by a vital and highly evolved culture. The observation of Plutarch in one place about the Indian Bucaphala, with some other cities of Alexander outside India, that it radiated an influence strong enough to 'crush barbarism' and 'enable a better

morality to supersede a worse' is certainly an exaggeration. Such of the cities as did not wither away soon after their foundation were probably revitalised to some extent by the arrival of the Bactrian Greeks about a century and a half later, but India was never *hellenised* in the same sense as Western Asia.

And yet it will be unfair to dismiss Alexander's invasion as a mere passing episode that left things altogether unchanged. It is true that it did not touch the political nerve-centre of the country but it destroyed the small-state system in vogue in the Punjab and Sind and thus assisted the cause of India's unity. The amalgamation of the small tribal chieftainships and republics into bigger political units undoubtedly made it an easier matter for Chandragupta Maurya to incorporate the north-west into his empire only a few years later. 'If Ugrasena-Mahapadma was the precursor of Chandragupta Maurya in the east, Alexander was the forerunner of that emperor in the north-west.' It may even be held that 'the lessons of the invasion and the example of Alexander go far to account for the career of Chandragupta and the establishment of his empire', though there are those who will deny this. Another important consequence was that India and the Greek world were brought closer to each other than before and the way was opened up for active contact bewteen them leading to the growth of trade and cultural intercourse.

We shall be throwing our history out of its proper perspective if we judge an astounding figure like that of Alexander in relation to a particular region solely by the actual work done by him there. He was one of the 'makers of history,' and the impact of his personality transcended the limits of particular regions and his own age. One may not be disposed to regard his Indian expedition itself as a significant event, but when his total work, direct and indirect, is taken into consideration, who can doubt that it was of some importance from the viewpoint of India ? It was he who, in the final analysis, made it possible for Greek armies to issue out of their base in Bactria and occupy large parts of India at a later date. It was his

original impulse that the Seleucid Monarchy, the Ptolemaic Kingdom and the Roman Empire carried forward in strengthening the roots of Hellenism in Syria, Iran, Asia Minor and Egypt where India came into contact with it. It is well known that the contact affected her and she imbibed some Hellenistic influences, specially in the fields of coinage, art and astronomy, 'an early evidence of the process being furnished by the silver coins of Sophytes modelled on the imitation of the Athenian 'owls'. At the back-end of this process stands the figure of Alexander of Macedon who 'opened the floodgates which had hitherto held the Occidental and Oriental civilisations apart and allowed them to run freely into each other.'

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Dr. R. C. Majumdar thinks that Caspatyrus may have been somewhere near Multan. But elsewhere Herodotus himself says that the Pactyica were the northern-most of the Indians. Hecataeus clearly places the city among the Gandharas.
2. The Behistun Inscription was engraved very early in the reign of Darius when, due to his constant engagements in suppressing the revolts, he could hardly have found time to make new conquests. The only known conquest of his predecessor, Cambyses, is that of Egypt. The other places and peoples mentioned in the Behistun record are, therefore, supposed to have been conquered by Cyrus.
3. The 'Hindu', not referred to in the Behistun Inscription (c.520—518 B. C.), are mentioned in the Hamadan Gold Tablet Inscriptions. These latter were probably engraved before c. 515 B. C. as soon afterwards Darius undertook the conquest of the European Sakas who are not named in them.
4. Some writers take 'this' to indicate the eastern side of the Indus. In that case, the soldiers of the third group were probably mercenaries.

CHAPTER III

Religious Developments

A. THE SPREAD OF NON-BRAHMANICAL RELIGIONS

The Upheaval of the Sixth Century B. C.

The mental quickening of the Later Vedic period brought to the surface many bold and original ideas which were soon firmly imprinted on the religious consciousness of the country. The most striking of these—the one which is the most strongly held in India to-day—, was the profound doctrine of the transmigration of soul *i.e.*, belief in the passage of the soul through a series of rebirths until it is finally emancipated. An integral part of this theory was the conviction that the material world with which the soul comes into contact at birth is essentially different from, and opposed to, it. While the Rigvedic seers loved the world and the pleasures it afforded, the scale now swung in the other direction and life came to be regarded as something evil, a drag on the soul which must be got rid of. As the symbol of life and the source of contact with the corrupting world of matter—indeed as a part of that world itself—the body came to be looked down upon as an instrument of degradation. The suppression of its impulses, and even self-mortification, began to be regarded as meritorious by many, thus leading to the phenomenal growth of asceticism to which a reference has already been made.[1] Side by side with these, the social aspect of religion also received greater attention than before, and the role of *Sila* or virtuous and ethical conduct in the spiritual progress of man was emphasised. An enlightened reaction set in against the numerous corrupt and superstitious practices such as black magic, palmistry and divination which enjoyed large vogue in the name of religion.[1a] Anti-ceremonialism found great support and the animal sacrifices of the Vedic religion came in for particularly sharp criticism at the hands of the advanced thinkers. "Frail are these boats, the eighteen in which this lower ceremonial is told," says the Mundaka Upanishad, "Those are fools who praise these as the highest good and they shall fall victims to old

age and death repeatedly." The killing of animals for sacrificial purposes has been unequivocally condemned by some Upanishadic sages.[1b]

With the passage of time, the new ideas gained further ground. Large groups of non-Brahmanical *Sramanas* or *Parivrajakas* (wanderers) moved through the country explaining their implications wherever they could find an audience. Advanced Brahmanical sages and teachers taught them to inquisitive pupils in hermitages and schools. As a result of this vigorous intellectual activity, a basic change began slowly to take place in the religious outlook of the country. The growing momentum of the ferment reached its culmination in the sixth century B. C. when it led to a great upheaval of thought and gave birth to two of the greatest religious teachers of India, thus bringing her into line with the other parts of the then civilised world where also epoch-making thinkers were promulgating their doctrines in this remarkable age, viz., Confucius and La'o-tse in China, Zoroaster in Persia, Jeremiah in Judea and Pythagoras in Greece. The inauguration of their movements by Gautama Buddha and Mahavira marks this century as one of revolutionary significance in the history of India, but the great importance of these celebrated teachers should not blind us to the fact that their activity was only a part, though historically the most significant part, of the intellectual and religious crisis of the period. There were a large number of other thinkers and teachers who also propagated their views at this period and tried to mould the 'collective mind' of the country in accordance with their own lights. The most important of these were the six 'heretical teachers' (*Michchhaditthikas*) mentioned in early Buddhist literature, who were all contemporaries of the Buddha and evidently enjoyed considerable respect in the Gangetic valley. All of them are described in identical words as 'the head of an order, of a following, the teacher of a school, well known and of repute as a sophist, revered by the people as a man of experience, who has long been a recluse, old and well-stricken in years'. One of these was Nigantha Nataputta, i. e. Mahavira himself. The names of the others are given as Purana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala, Ajita Kesakambalin, Pakudha Kachchayana and Sanjaya Belatthaputta.[2] The schools founded or represented by the five last named 'false philosophers' did not have a

long vogue ; they died out early or were amalgamated with others. But the sects of Gautama and Mahavira survived the ravages of time. Thanks to the organizing capacity of their great leaders, they were soon firmly established in the country and had a large say in the shaping of the religious and intellectual traditions of India.

It is necessary to add here that the remarkable excitement of the sixth century B. C. which led to the rise of Buddhism and Jainism was largely intellectual and religious in origin, but not exclusively so. The thought ferment of the Later Vedic period, the mounting disaffection against the hide-bound ritualism of the Brahmanical religion and the brutal emphasis it laid on the sacrificial slaughter of animals, the intellectual discontent against the increasing popularity of superstitious and corrupt rites[2a]—all these combined to give rise to it, but even a casual acquaintance with the teachings of the more prominent thinkers of the time clearly shows that social, economic and other factors also played a significant role in its generation and intensification. The deep-seated and wide-spread resentment against the existing conditions which characterized the age greatly strengthened the quest of new values and philosophies. In the social field, the growing petrifaction of caste rules, the consequent exaltation of Brahmanas and the corresponding degradation of the other classes, specially the Sudras whose social limitations were now really stringent, was a potential source of disaffection.[3] Women felt their growing insignificance and longed to rectify it.[3] Economically the costliness of the Vedic ritual called for severe criticism and not infrequently the thinkers of the age attacked it on the financial side.[3] Though there is no clear evidence for it, the celebration of the great sacrifices by the kings must have implied a considerable increase in the tax-burden of the people and political rites like the *Asvamedha*, glorified by the Brahmanical religion, could not but have been detrimental to the peace of the land and to the smooth functioning of the trade relations of the various regions. The narration of stories and tales about the victories and military exploits of ancient kings and heroes was an important part of these and it is interesting to note that the Buddha strongly condemned the practice as tending to lead to war, terror and violence. The Brahmana attempt to place the Vedas on the pedestal of infallibility by declaring them as 'divinely revealed' texts (*apaurusheya*) was also causing considerable resentment. The authoritarian attitude implied in the process was rightly

judged as harmful to freedom of thought and was vehemently opposed as such by all the non-Brahmanical intellectuals.[3a] The times were thus 'ripe for revolt' and the intellectual unrest found a vitalising base in the material conditions of the period. Buddhism and Jainism, the tangible products of this unrest, were not mere philosophical or religious dogmas but systems of life which also warred against the evils of society. Vaishnavism and Saivism whose growth and initial popularity were also connected with the agitation of the period about the sixth century B.C. and which may be said to reflect another aspect of it, were less revolutionary in character.[4]

a. BUDDHISM

The yellow-clad *bhikkhu* who founded Buddhism was known in subsequent times as Buddha, the Enlightened One. Tradition avers that his real name was Siddhartha. It is a matter of extreme regret that no authentic biography of this remarkable person who has been adjudged as the greatest Indian of all times by more than one authority has been vouchsafed us by any early writer. As in the case of most other heroes and saints of the ancient times, there has been an enormous growth of legends and myths round his name and personality and the real historical Buddha is almost completely overlaid by later accretions. The myth-makers' hand is clealy discernible in the glamorous versions of his life occurring in such comparatively late works as the *Mahavastu*, *Lalitavistara*, *Buddhacharita* of Asvaghosha and the *Abhinishkramana Sutra* which exists now only in the Chinese garb. The Pali scriptures themselves give somewhat less highly coloured, and obviously more reliable, information about him, but that information is scanty in the extreme, specially about the earlier part of the Master's career upto the Great Renunciation, and it is also not altogether free from the defect of embellishment. *In the quest of the historical Sakyamuni*, therefore, we have to move with extreme caution and be constantly on guard against mistaking for true history what may be purely fictitious.

The Master was born in the *Khattiya* (Kshatriya) tribe of the Sakyas who occupied a part of the Nepal Tarai and had their administrative headquarters at the town of Kapilavastu. His father, *raja* Suddhodana, belonged to the aristocracy of the tribe and had probably been for a time the elected head of the republic of Kapilavastu[5]. His mother was Maya or Mahamaya who died shortly after giving birth to him. The exact spot of his nativity, the Lumbini Garden, is

marked by a commemorative stone pillar bearing an inscription which the emperor Asoka set up there about three centuries afterwards.

The education of young Siddhartha was obviovsly properly attended to as in later life he was able to challenge successfully a number of rival teachers, including learned Brahmanas, in disputation; but no trustworthy details are forthcoming. On attaining to youth, he began to lead the customary luxurious life of his class and entered the householder's stage. Later Buddhist works unanimously affirm that he married a beautiful lady, variously called Yasodhara, Bimba, Gopa or Bhadda Kachchana, and had by her a son named Rahula[6].

The young aristocrat, however, was far from experiencing real happiness or mental calm in the married state. He had always been of a contemplative turn of mind and about this time seems to have fallen under the influence of the prevailing philosophical mood of *Duhkhavada* (Sorrow-ism). He pondered deeply over the distressing phenomena of old age, disease, poverty, death and the various other forms of Sorrow which is inherent in life. As the *Majjhima Nikaya* puts it :

'Then, O monks, before my Enlightenment, while yet a Bodhisattva and not fully enlightened, being myself subject to birth I sought out the nature of birth, bing subject to old age, I sought out the nature of old age,......of sickness.......of death......of sorrow....of impurity'.

The more he thought about it, the more was the scion of the Sakyas convinced that a full and free life is difficult for the householder to achieve. He decided to put on the yellow robes and 'pass from a house to the houseless state'. Renunciation had claimed him.

He was twenty-nine when he left home. In the later Buddhist texts, the *Mahabhinishkramana* or the Great Departure takes the form of a highly ornamented, pathos-ridden story but its earlier version as found in the *Majjhima Nikaya*, 1·240, is hardly more impressive than the common tale of many an obscure Indian youth turning ascetic:

'Now, at another time, while yet a boy, a black-haired lad in the prime of youth, in the first stage of life, while my unwilling father and mother wept with tear-stained faces, I cut off my hair and beard, and putting on yellow robes went from a house to a houseless life.'

From this point onwards, there are more details to be found in the Pali scriptures. In the search of knowledge and calm, the young aspirant stayed for a time at the hermitage of the sage Alara Kalama

near Vaisali in North Bihar but abandoned him for another preceptor, Rudraka Ramaputra, who dwelt on the outskirts of Rajagriha and was likewise soon foresaken. The future Buddha then proceeded to a place called Uruvela (mod. Bodhgaya) in the country of Magadha and settled there for his religious striving. Under the influence of the current belief in the efficacy of ascetic practices, he at first adopted a course of austerities of which a graphic, though somewhat exaggerated, account is to be found in the *Pitakas*. But its futility was soon discovered. While it could not bring him 'superhuman, truly noble knowledge,' it brought the young *sadhu* almost to the door of death. Very wisely he gave it up and ever after was a confirmed opponent of extreme asceticism. Next, he adopted the way of *Jhana* (meditation) and it was this which finally led him to the desired goal. About six years' deep and earnest meditation clarified his ideas on the question of Sorrow (*Dukkha*) and enabled him to formulate a systematic doctrine of his own. At the early age of thirty-five he had, he believed, discovered the cause of sorrow that permeates life and also the means of getting rid of it. He had become the Buddha, the Enlightened One.

Soon after the Enlightenment, he began to think of publishing his new doctrine and establishing a community of followers. He made his way to the Deer Park at Isipattana (Sarnath near Banaras) and here in c. 530 B. C., delivered his first sermon, inaugurating the great Buddhist movement which was destined to affect the lives of countless millions in Asia. Tradition says that this sermon was no other than the *Dhamma-Chakka-Pavattana-Sutta* (the Discourse which set the Wheel of the Law in motion) incorporated in the *Samyutta Nikaya* of the *Sutta Pitaka* (V. 420) and was spoken to a small audience of five Brahmana ascetics only. The main point made out in this sermon relates to the problem which was uppermost in the Buddha's mind—the problem of all-pervasive Sorrow and its solution. After declaring that the seeker after Truth should follow the Middle Path, avoiding the two extremes of sensuous life and asceticism of the self-mortifying variety, the Master proceeds to explain his views about Sorrow in the clear formulation of the celebrated Four Noble Truths (*Chattari Ariya Sachchani*):

'Now this, O Monks, is the Noble Truth of Pain (*Dukkha*). Birth is painful, old age is painful, sickness is painful, sorrow, lamentation, defection, and despair are painful. Contact with unpleasant things is painful, not getting what one wishes is painful. In short, the five *khandhas* of grasping are painful.

Now this, O monks, is the Noble Truth of the cause of Pain (*Dukkha-samudaya*) : that Craving (*Tanha*) which leads to rebirth with pleasure and lust, finding pleasure here and there, namely the Craving for passion, the Craving for existence, the Craving for non-existence.

Now this, O monks, is the Noble Truth of the cessation of Pain (*Dukkha-nirodha*) : the cessation without remainder of that Craving, abandonment, forsaking, release, un-attachment.

Now this, O monks, is the Noble Truth of the way that leads to the cessation of Pain (*Dukkha-nirodha-gamini Patipada*) : this is the Noble Eightfold Path (*Aryashtangamarga*), namely, right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration[7]. Thus, O monks, only doctrines unheard before, in me sight and knowledge arose, wisdom arose, light arose.'

To sum up, what the Buddha taught in the First Sermon at Isipattana was this : (a) that life, as it is generally lived, is inevitably mixed up with Sorrow ; through the gate of birth we pass into the Valley of Sorrow and Pain; (b) that it is Craving or Desire that leads to rebirth and hence to Sorrow, (c) that in order to get rid of Sorrow we must destroy its root cause, Craving, and (d) that this can be done by following the Noble Eightfold Path.

The doctrine of the Four Noble Truths concerning Sorrow and its annihilation as set forth in the above discourse constitutes the core of Buddhism as it is to be found in the great body of canonical literature known as *Tripitaka* (the Three Baskets). *Tanha* or Craving is further represented as the consequence, or rather the active side, of Ignorance (*Avijja*) relating primarily to the nature of the universe. Buddhism of the *Tripitaka* inculcates the belief that the universe is *dukkha* (full of sorrow or evil) and *anichcha* (impermanent or ever-changing). At the same time, in startling opposition to majority of the established philosophies it also teaches that it

anatta, i. e. without a non-changing, abiding entity called *atta* or soul. It is the non-comprehension (*Avijja*) or only partial grasping of this three-fold nature of the universe that gives rise to *Tanha* and ultimately leads to Sorrow. The relation between Ignorance and Sorrow is often elucidated in the form of a chain of causes and effects (*Patichchasamuppada*) : 'from Ignorance arises Imagination (*Samkhara*), from Imagination arises Consciousness (*Vijnana*), from Consciousness arise Name and Form (*Namarupa*), from Name and Form arises the Sphere of the Six (*Shadayatana*), from the Sphere of the Six arises Contact (*Phassa or Sparsa*), from Contact arises Sensation (*Vedana*), from Sensation arises Craving (*Tanha*), from Craving arises Grasping (*Upadana*), from Grasping arises Becoming (*Bhava*), from Becoming arises Birth (*Jati*) and from Birth as cause arise old age, death, grief, lamentation, pain, dejection and despair'.[8] So long *Avijja* and Craving are not overcome the monotonous cycle of re-births (*Samsara*) continues and there is no emancipation from the shackles of Sorrow implied in birth. The actions of the Individual (Karma) are in the highest degree important for they determine his high or low status in the series of rebirths and assist or retard his progress. With the cessation of Ignorance and Craving, the necessity of rebirth comes to an end, and the state of emancipation, *Nirvana*, is reached. Nirvana is the *summum bonum* of the Buddhist faith.[9]

Doubts have been raised about Buddhism of the Tripitaka being essentially the teaching of the Buddha and much discussion now centres round the question of the original doctrine of the Sakya sage. A group of influential historians believe that he did not repudiate the belief in soul and it has been held that his ideas 'differed but little from the teachings of the Upanishadic sages.' The contention has also been advanced that he 'rejected the doctrine of transmigration and taught merely the almost self-evident truism that one generation is affected by the deeds of the preceding one.'[10] To him has further been attributed an extreme pragmatism ignoring all dogma. It is possible that there is some truth in these or other views current on the subject, but it seems that there is a

considerable subjective element in the logic by which they have been arrived at, and a definite opinion is difficult to give at present.

As regards the social views of the Buddha, it seems hardly possible to deny that he was a believer in the equality of men and was firmly opposed to the invidious distinctions of caste as it had developed by then. He was prepared to accept differences between man and man but based, not on heredity, but on the criterion of wisdom, action and virtue. To him, 'one becomes Brahmana or *Vassala* not by birth; one becomes Brahamana or *Vassala* by action.' In the *Vassettha Sutta* as also in the *Sonadanda Sutta* we find the observation: 'whereas in the case of plants, quadrupeds, serpents, fish and birds, there are many species and marks by which they can be distinguished, in the case of men there are no such species and no such marks.' In the Assalayana Sutta, the Buddha is made to refute the superiority of Brahmanas and affirm that all men are alike, there being none high or low by birth. These and numerous other passages in the early Buddhist works clearly show that the Buddha had the outlook of a social reformer desirous of seeing the contemporary society rid of the evil of caste. He admitted persons of all social ranks freely to his church and held that on entering his fold all men lost their old castes and names as 'great streams, O disciples, however many they may be, the Ganga, Jamuna, Sarabhu and the Mahi, when they reach the great ocean, lose their old name and old descent and bear anly one name—the Great Ocean.' There seems much truth in the observation of Rhys Davids that if the Buddha had his way there would be no caste system.[12]

Whatever may have been the philosophical or metaphysical presuppositions of the Buddha, one fact stands out in clear relief—that he was preeminently a 'moral philosopher' and laid great emphasis on the cultivation of ethical and social virtues. The position taken up by him in relation to the central problem of human life was essentially Socratic. He regarded *Avijja* (Ignorance) as the ultimate source of Sorrow, but did not deem the mere acquisition of knowledge sufficient for liberation. In his system morality and knowledge are blended to form an integral whole. The

Noble Eightfold Path leads to the acquisition of *Prajna* or *Supreme Knowledge* through the twofold practice of *Sila* (morality) and *Samadhi* (concentration), and attaches the highest importance to the noble qualities of *ahimsa*, *maitri*, *Karuna*, *mudita* and *upeksha*. It inculcates the control of the body, mind and speech, abjuration of ill-will, hatred, worry, unreasonable scepticism and the like, and the cultivation of a charitable, philanthropic temperament. It is as much a way of morality as of knowledge. 'The Buddha esteems knowledge very highly, but he does not place it above morality as the Upanishads do ; nor does he identify knowledge with morality. They always go together and the latter leads the way. This is the general Buddhist notion of the relation between knowledge and morality.'[11]

The Buddha ridiculed the preposterous claims of superiority put forth by the Brahmanas and openly rejected the authority of the Vedas. 'When a string of blind men are clinging one to the other, neither can the foremost see, nor can the middle one see, nor can the hindmost see. Just even so is the talk of the Brahmanas versed in three Vedas but blind talk ; the first sees not, the middle one sees not, nor can the last see. The talk, then, of these Brahmana versed in the three Vedas turns out to be ridiculous, mere words, a vain and empty thing.'[11a] He completely denied the efficacy of the Vedic ceremonies and rites, severely condemned animal sacrifices on humanitarian grounds and firmly believed in the futility of self-mortification and religious austerities. He also vigorously combated the superstitious beliefs and practices widely prevalent at the time such as the belief in the holy properties of the water of rivers like the Ganges and Sarasvati, divination, prognostication, fortune-telling, interpretation of dreams, magic etc. 'Sramana Gautama' he says, 'keeps aloof from such patter.'

The five Brahmana ascetics who listened to the preaching at Isipattana were the first converts gained by the Buddha for his new doctrine. The task of propagating the Dhamma then began in full force. The Master, with his devoted band of followers, led a life of ceaseless toil, constantly moving about the country for nine months in the

year and spending only the *vassa* (the rainy season) at one place. His itinerary covered a considerable part of the Ganges valley from Anga in the east to the neighbourhood of Mathura in the west and from the Himalayan foothills in the north to Magadha in the south.[13] In most places he was well received by the people and made a great impression upon them by the profundity and sweetness of his teaching. Townsfolk and villagers alike claimed his attention and that of his followers. While he frequently visited big cities like Rajagriha, Champa, Vaisali and Kausambi, he also moved through small forest towns alike Alavi (near Ghazipur) and villages like Ekanala in Magadha, delivering discourses and ordaining people. In the course of his wanderings he met in discussion, and often defeated, teachers of rival schools, including learned Brahmanas and stubborn ascetics. People from all classes and walks of life were attracted to his teaching and declared their faith in it; princes, generals, wealthy bankers, common householders, farmers, weavers, disciples of other teachers, courtesans and, if tradition is to be believed, even reformed dacoits accepted him as their spiritual guide. He received encouragement from kings like Bimbisara and Ajatasatru of Magadha and Prasenajit of Kosala even though these kings were probably not formally initiated into his religion and extended their patronage to other faiths also. Tradition affirms that Udayana of Vatsa, though at first hostile to him, was finally converted to his faith by Pindola Bharadvaja and Pradyota of Avanti also sent him an invitation to visit the western country which he was unable to accept personally due to old age. The tribal republics of the Gangetic valley showed favour to him and his sect. At Kapilavastu he got a large number of converts including members of his own family and the notorious Devadatta who later caused a minor schism and established a sect of his own. In Vaisali also he found some support, though Mahavira was probably more popular there. He was held in high regard by the Mallas, Koliyas, Bhaggas, Bulis and Kalamas, all of whom are said to have sent their representatives to acquire shares in his ashes after his death.

The Buddha attached no importance to purely mechanical acts of self-denial. Nevertheless, he did have a preference for monkish life over that of the householder as he believed that the attachments of the world are bound to hinder the effort to extinguish the flame of Desire or Craving which is the cause of rebirth and accordingly 'persuaded the more earnest of his followers to renounce the world.' There soon formed

about him a large group of monkish disciples among whom were eminent *bhikkhus* like Sariputta, Moggallana, Mahakassapa, Mahakachchayana, Upali, Punna Mataniputta, Ananda and others who occupy a high place in the ecclesiastical tradition of the Buddhists. When there were sixty monks in all, he enjoined upon them the duty of preaching and sent them to spread the Doctrine in different directions. Soon afterwards he also granted them the power to ordain people themselves without presenting them to him. Thus was laid the foundation of the great Buddhist Order of Monks (*Bhikkhu-Sangha*) which soon acquired a considerable membership and became an important religious institution. The mendicants at first followed the example of their leader and moved about the country without any fixed dwellings. But gradually pious lay devotees began to build permanent abodes for them and monasteries (*viharas*) sprang into existence, the earliest ones probably at Rajagriha, Kapilavastu and Sravasti followed by those at Champa and Kausambi. It is not definitely known if the monks gave up the practice of constant travel in the lifetime of the Buddha or after his death but the building of the monasteries enabled them to lead a congregational life for at least three or four months in the year and thus were formed the nuclei of the local *Sanghas* which soon emerged as the chief element in the organisation of the Buddhist Church. For the guidance of the *Sanghas* and individual *bhikkhus*, the Buddha framed a set of rules which are traditionally supposed to be collected in the *Patimokkha* and other parts of the *Vinaya Pitaka*. These sources reveal an elaborate organisation[14] which could hardly have been perfected by the Master himself but of which the ground-work was certainly laid by him. The monks were expected to lead a life of poverty and chastity though the ascetic ideal enjoined upon them was not of a severe type. Their dress was a simple one consisting of only three pieces of unsewn yellow cloth and beards and heads were generally shaven. Food was usually collected by begging but invitations from wealthy patrons were accepted and donations from the same also received, though not in cash. Cleanliness and punctuality of habits, specially in respect of meals, was insisted upon. In the *viharas*, the monks dwelt in cells which they occupied singly or conjointly with others. The communal life in the monasteries was regulated in a generally democratic way, though spiritual eminence, learning, age and standing in the Church naturally counted for much. The *bhikkhus* spent the greater part of their time in study and meditation but they also did the menial work

such as cleaning the cells, verandahs and yards, attending to gardens, washing clothes, cooking meals and preparing various useful things for the monastery. From the time of the Buddha himself there were probably regular assemblies known as *Uposatha* on the full and new moon days when the rules of discipline were recited and confessions as to their infringement openly made. In the canonical texts we come across ten 'Commandments' or Prohibitions which the *bhikkhus* had to abide by, viz., not to take away or conceal others' property, not to kill, not to use intoxicating drinks, not to tell lies, not to commit adultery, not to take part in singing or dancing, not to use perfumes or flowers, not to eat at odd hours, not to sleep on comfortable beds and not to receive or keep money. But it is difficult to say how many of these were prescribed by the Buddha. The monks commanded considerable respect among the lay-folk, but they were far from being 'priests' in the conventional sense of the term. 'In a system which acknowledged no Creator, the monks could never become the only efficient intercessors between man and his Maker. Their help was not required to avert by their prayers the anger of gods whose deity was temporary and who had no power over men. And since salvation was held to be, and to depend on, a gradual change in man's nature, brought about by his own self-denial and his own earnestness, the monks could never obtain control over the keys of heaven and hell'. Renunciation was not deemed irrevocable; anyone was free to give up the monkish life if and when he felt inclined to do so.

The Buddha ordained women also. It is not known if this was an innovation on his part or he was simply following an existing custom.[15] The first woman to receive *Pabbajja* (ordination) was probably his own foster mother, Prajapati Gautami, who is said to have entered the Order in the fifth year of his ministry. Tradition attributes to him a reluctance to admit women and it is stated that he thrice refused permission to them to join the *Sangha*. At last, however, moved by the earnestness of Prajapati and the intercession of Ananda on her behalf, he consented to ordain women if they agreed to observe eight Strict Rules *(Guru-dhamma)*.[16] The orthodox belief is that upto the last he considered this an act of mistake and used to declare that due to the admission of women the True Discipline (*Brahmacharya*) would last only five hundred years while without them it would have lasted for twice the period. It is hard to decide how far this may be regarded as true. In view of the Buddha's great catholicity and breadth of vision, it is certainly a little difficult to place confidence in it.

It was not the Buddha's exclusive aim 'to swell the ranks of shavelings'. In some quarters his tendency to encourage people to take up the monastic life was met with hostility and evidence is on record that in Magadha people accused him of disrupting families and promoting widowhood and childlessness. There was perhaps also a slight feeling that monks and nuns were parasites on society taking no part in its productive activity.[17] It was therefore only people with a more earnest religious bent whom the Buddha advised to give up the world. To the great majority who were prevented from adopting the monk's garb by inclination or circumstances, he preached a religion of simple morality, love and philanthropy, endeavouring to win them over to the path of virtue. The *Pitakas* contain some discourses addressed to lay-folk. The most important of these is the *Sigalovada Sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya* which is described as *gibi-vinaya* or "householders' discipline" by the commentator Buddhaghosha. In the main, the *Sutta* preaches only such simple virtues as proper relations with one's fellowmen, parents, children, kinsmen, Sramanas, Brahmanas, servants and slaves and abstinence from killing, adultery, falsehood, drinking, merry-making, evening shows, dice-playing and idleness. It advises housewives to perform their domestic duties efficiently, wish well of their husbands, children and relatives, and be chaste and kind. Husbands are asked to respect the wives, give them full charge of the home and supply them with fine clothes and jewellery as far as possible. Employers are exhorted to be mild in the exaction of work from servants and slaves and the latter to do their work thoroughly and willingly. There is hardly anything in the *sutta* which may be described as distinctive. The teaching embodied in it is, in fact, only a simple definition of 'good life' as generally understood in India and contains nothing which would not he accepted by the followers of any religion of the time, including the more enlightened Brahmanas. The lay devotees, technically known as *upasaka*, were required not to make their livelihood by professions which involve loss of life, e. g., that of the butcher, and to have no faith in the auspicious rites and ceremonies. The first five of the ten 'Commandments' were prescribed for them also. The goal held up before them was rebirth in one of the heavens or even as Sakka, king of gods. Normally it was deemed impossible for them to attain a sufficiently high stage of spiritual development leading to full emancipation, but, in exceptional cases, the possibility of *Nirvana* for them seems to have been conceded. The *Anguttra Nikaya* mentions the *gahapatis*

(house-holders) Sudatta (Anathapindika), Chitta, Ugga and a few others who are said to have been *amatadasso*, i.e., who had realised the Immortal or Nirvana.

It is evident from the early records of Buddhism that the new faith gained the support of a large number of people and had the good fortune of being securely established in the lifetime of the Founder. No accurate statistics are available, but it appears fairly certain that there already existed many Buddhist centres in the countries of Kosaḷa, Vatsa, Magadha, Anga and North Bihar before Gautama entered *Parinirvana*. The causes of this rapid expansion are to be found partly in the Doctrine itself and partly in extraneous circumstances. As Rhys Davids succintly puts it, 'had the Buddha merely taught philosophy, he might have had as small a following as Comte.' As it is, in his discussions he refused to be dragged into metapyhsical subtleties and emphasized the moral and philanthropic aspect of religion—a factor which undoubtedly did much to popularise his teaching among the common men who were more confounded than enlightened by the philosophical hair-splittings of the other teachers of the time. His system retained just enough of asceticism to attract the man in the street whose natural frailty of body and mind shrank from the rigours of extreme self-mortification. The practice of his religion involved very little extra expense over and above the normal household budget, thus providing a striking contrast to the growing costliness of the popular ceremonies and rites. His downright condemnation of slaughter in the name of the religion evoked wide-spread enthusiasm and his unequivocal denunciation of the invidious tyranny of caste appealed to the non-Brahmin masses to whom it had begun to prove irksome. Above all, though original in some respects, his religion fitted squarely in the age-old grooves of the country's traditions and at no point involved a violent break from them. It has rightly been said of him that he was 'born a Hindu, lived a Hindu and died a Hindu.' He unhesitatingly accepted many of the current beliefs and practices of his time and even characterised his faith as the 'ancient wisdom of the land.'

It is, however, doubtful if the internal factors alone would have sufficed to secure for Buddhism the ready acceptance that it got from many people of the Gangetic tract. To not an inconsiderable extent the credit for its early spread should be given to the evangelising zeal of the monks on whom the Buddha purposely enjoined the task of

propagating the *Dhamma*. Himself he was a preacher of no mean calibre and, like Jesus Christ at a later date, made potentially first-rate missionaries of his disciples—Sariputta, Moggallana and others—by instilling into them something of his own sincerity of purpose. He and his group of followers preached to the people in the latter's own language, thus securing an advantage over Brahmanism whose official vehicle, Sanskrit, was the language of only the educated few. The organised machinery of his *Sangha* and the liberal patronage of kings, republican chiefs and wealthy and influential persons were valuable assets to him and so was the propaganda work done by the nuns on his behalf among the womenfolk. The force of his personality also did much to attract attention to his teaching. All accounts are agreed that he was possessed of remarkable personal qualities—a fine presence accompanied by profound learning, mild speech, compassionate disposition, widest possible tolerance and other admirable mental and moral virtues. 'His personality, the very focus of of his ethico-religious system, was the embodiment of his teaching. It was indeed his noble personality, perfectly developed through the mental culture that he went through, that played so important a part in attracting and converting those who otherwise might have remained hostile or neutral to his religion. Indeed his personality, like thaof Socrates, can be said to have an ethical value in causing people to step on the same way of purification as himself as their leader did. And his life of eighty years displayed all the valuable virtues in visible forms and served as the perfect specimen of the religiousl ife which the Buddhist ought to pursue.'[18]

It is possible that the changing economic mood of the time had also something to do with the early success of Buddhism. The period about the sixth century B. C. was, as we shall see later, one of great economic expansion when the 'urbanising process' was proceeding apace. Brahmanism with its economic setting of rural conditions was not wholly in consonance with it and a new angle on the relationships of life an angle different from that of Brahmanism but not outside the direct line of past development—seems to have been called for. That angle was supplied by Buddhism. It may not be without significance that the Buddha was patronised by many leading bankers and traders of the day who formed the spearhead of economic growth. The rise of Buddhism and Jainism is viewed by some in the light of a Kshatriya revolt against the superiority of the Brahmanas inherent in the Vedic religion and the caste system but the mere fact that the founders of the new religions were Kshatriyas is hardly sufficient to prove the

contention. That the discontent of the Kshatriyas was probably a factor in the popularity of Buddhism may be conceded but the assumption that the heterodox movements were started primarily with a view to overthrowing the Brahmanas from their high social position is an entirely mistaken one.

During the last twenty years of his life, the Buddha probably gave up the habit of spending the *vassas* at different places and adopted Sravasti in the Kosala country as a more or less permanent home. Shortly before the end a serious misfortune befell the great man when Vidudabha of Kosala attacked his kinsmen, the Sakyas, and massacred a large number of them. He died at the ripe age of eighty in the small town of Kusinara (Kasia, Deoria District) in the territory of the Mallas, of indigestion caused by eating a meal of *sukkara-maddava* which cannot be satisfactorily identified at present, though many would take it to be pork. This was probably in 483 B. C. The last words addressed by him to the monks assembled at his bed-side are said to have been : "Now then, monks, I address you. Subject to decay are compound things; strive with earnestness."[19]

The death of the Buddha plunged the Order into the gloom of sorrow and apprehension. Under the shadow of the great calamity, some senior *bhikkhus*, chief among whom was Mahakassapa, decided to convene a council (*Sangiti*) of the monks of different regions in the Sattapanni cave near Rajagriha. The memory of this great gathering is preserved in several Buddhist works though in slightly discrepant versions and it is no longer possible to dismiss it as 'pure invention, and, moreover, an invention of early date.'[20] The council obviously met (with a traditional strength of 500 chosen *arhats*) with a view to counteracting the depressing effect of the Buddha's passing on the *morale* of the monks and also of preparing, so far it was possible, an authentic redaction of his preachings to minimise the possibility of future tampering. The main figures in the council were Mahakassapa himself, who probably presided over the deliberations, and the *arhats* Ananda and Upali, though the other delegates also seem to have made active contributions to the debates. Ananda and Upali recited the discourses on *Dhamma* (Doctrine and Ethics) and *Vinaya* (Rules of conduct) respectively as they remembered having heard the Buddha give them and thus a beginning was made of the great canonical collections known as *Sutta Pitaka* and *Vinaya Pitaka*. The present bulk of these works is, of course, not to be traced in its entirety to the synod of Rajagriha and is the result of many

years' gradual growth, but there can hardly be any doubt that the text as settled by the council is incorporated into it. The assembled monks administered a mild rebuke to Ananda for some of his previous mistakes and passed the sentence of excommunication on the turbulent *bhikkhu* Chhanda in accordance with the dying behest of the Buddha. They also took the important decision of 'not ordaining what has not been ordained and not revoking what has been ordained' though the Master is said to have authorised them at the time of his death to rescind the minor precepts if they so liked.

The next landmark in the history of Buddhism in the pre-Mauryan epoch was a second general council which met in the town of Vaisali in North Bihar about a hundred years after the *Parinirvana*.[21] It appears that no sooner had the masterful personality of the Founder been removed by death than differences began to appear within the Buddhist Church. A section of the monks, headed by the venerable Purana, probably did not participate in the conference of Rajagriha and declined to recognise the Dhamma and Vinaya as fixed by it as the true teaching of the Buddha. There were many things in the Doctrine which the Buddha had left unexplained and on which consequently a divergence of opinion was possible. The freedom of conduct that he had granted to the individual *viharas* was also conducive to the growth of differences. In the period following his demise, there was a considerable growth of such tendencies in which geographical factors also seem to have played a part. The eastern monks whose main centres were Vaisali and Pataliputra began to adopt practices which were looked askance at by the western brethren of Kausambi, Patha, Avanti and other places as being contrary to the injunctions of the Buddha. When the differences came to a head it was found necessary to convene a second general assembly which met in Vaisali in the reign of Kalasoka, son of Sisunaga. In conformity with the rules laid down in the *Vinaya Pitaka*, the assembly entrusted the task of discussing the debated points (which are said to have been ten in number)[22] to a sub-committee of eight senior *theras* in which the contending parties were equally represented. The committee gave its verdict against the easterners (described in some texts as Vajjiputtakas) and declared their ten practices as unorthodox. The account of the council of Vaisali is found in many Buddhist works and, like that of the assembly of Rajagriha, is certainly based on a genuine tradition.

It is clear from the tradition itself that the council failed to resolve the differences of the monks and marks the beginning of the first important schism in the Buddhist church. According to one version, the Vajjiputtakas declined to be bound by its judgment and called a council of their own which gave the stamp of approval to the 'Ten Indulgences' and prepared a new edition of the scriptures. The historicity of this conference of the Vajjiputtakas is extremely doubtful but it is certain that the eastern monks did not acquiesce in the verdict of the Vaisali assembly and the two sets of clergy—eastern and western—drifted farther apart from each other. Gradually the differences between them crystallized. Non-agreement invaded the field of doctrine also, and the Order split up into two sects, viz., Theravada and Mahasanghika. The former probably comprised the western monks in general while the supporters of the latter were drawn mainly from the eastern communities.

The division thus started gradually gathered strength 'and further sub-divisions, based on minute differences of view-point', began to take place in the Buddhist fold. Soon the Theravada community branched off into eleven and the Mahasanghika into seven sub-sects thus bringing the total number of Buddhist schools to eighteen.[23] This unhappy state of things proved a lasting one and could not be completely eradicated even by the vigorous efforts for unity made in the time of Asoka.

The growth of internal dissensions naturally had an adverse effect on the progress of Buddhism. During the period of about two centuries which elapsed between the death of the Buddha and the accession of Asoka, the pace of expansion was much slower than it had been in the time of the Founder. But the domestic acrimony did not make the monks entirely oblivious of the supreme duty of propagating the faith and ardent *bhikkhus* succeeded in establishing the creed in regions which had remained more or less unaffected uptill now. Before the meeting of the second assembly, Buddhist centres had already been founded in Sankasya (Sankissa, in the Farrukhabad district of western U. P.) and Patha which lay to the west of Kosala and Buddhist monks had carried their Master's message as far west as Avanti (Malwa). Learned and venerable *theras* from all these places are said to have taken part in the council of Vaisali. Buddhist influence also spread to Mathura from where Moggaliputta Tissa, the celebrated precceptor of Asoka, hailed. Though the real period of the glory of Buddhism begins only after the accession of

Asoka, it seems certain that it was not the creed of a weak or languishing sect when the great Maurya emperor adopted it as his personal religion.

b. JAINISM

For about two centuries after its foundation, the Nirgrantha sect of Parsvanatha remained a small, obscure community of monkish and lay disciples. But the upheaval of the sixth century B. C. brought the metaphysical and moral ideas propounded by it into the limelight and placed them in the forefront of the country's religious life. Vardhamana Mahavira, a contemporary of the Buddha, vigorously championed them, with some variations and reforms,[24] and eventually the Nirgranthas amalgamated with his own followers to form the nucleus of the great historical sect of the Jainas. Parsva was accepted as a former *Tirthankara* (traditionally the 23rd) of the combined sect which made great progress under the energetic guidance of the new leader and, like Buddhism, soon became a force to reckon with.

It is even more difficult to reconstruct an authentic life-sketch of Mahavira than that of the Buddha. The Ardha-Magadhi canon of the Jainas, our principal early source of information on the subject, assumed its present form only in the fifth century A. D. During the thousand years that elapsed between the death of Mahavira and the final redaction of the canon, devoted monkish and lay writers were busy inventing new details to embellish the biography of the great teacher. As no satisfactory stratifaction of the canon has yet been made, a perfectly reliable biography of Mahavira is still a desideratum. The following are a few items of *apparently* authentic information about him gleaned from the various sources.

Mahavira, whose real name was Vardhamana, was born at Kundapuri or Kundagrama, a suburb of Vaisali. He was the son of Siddhartha, a chief of the Jnatrika clan which was a constituent member of the great Vajji Confederation and his mother, Trisala or Videhadatta, was the sister of the celebrated Lichchhavi *ganaraja* Chetaka of Vaisali who headed the republican opposition to Ajatasatru of Magadha. Vardhamana was brought up after the customary fashion of tribal aristocrats and in due time married Yasoda of the Kaundinya gotra. Like the Buddha, however, his real interest lay in the search for salavation, and he longed to adopt the ascetic's mode of life. After the death of his parents, when he was already in his thirtieth year, he formally renounced the world and passed into the houseless state. For twelve years he wandered from place to place practising austerities of the severest

kind, meditating on the nature of Reality and the problem of existence and engaging in discussions with teachers of various sects. At first he wore a single garment, but subsequently discarded this also and began to move about in complete nudity. For a time he was associated with another well known teacher of the age, Makkhali Gosala, but the two ascetics could not see eye to eye with each other and soon parted company. The twelve years of self-mortification, meditation and wandering gave maturity to the thoughts of Mahavira and, in c. 500 B. C., the 42-year old ascetic had the same feeling of spiritual satisfaction that the Buddha had at the age of 35. He believed that he had solved the riddle of existence and sorrow and was duly equiped spiritually to begin his career as a preacher. He was now a Kevalin, possessed of boundless knowledge, Nirgrantha (the Unfettered One) or Jina (Victor).

Little that may be regarded as directly representative of Mahavira's discourses has survived. But the remarkable conservatism characterizing the history of Jainism through the centuries makes it possible that the fundamentals of the creed, as it is found in the canon, 'are very old indeed and essentially those of Mahavira'. Like Buddhism, Jainism rejects the authority of the Vedas and attaches no importance to the sacrificial ritual of the Brahmanas. It is primarily a teaching of severe discipline, founded on the philosophical basis of the primordial duality and opposition of Spirit and Matter. Encased in the physical bodies, rapidly whirled by the stream of transmigration, are the Spiritual Selves of living beings, dragged down from their blissful heights to mundane level by the dead weight of Matter. They can, and must, triumph over Matter.

The Universe, subsisting according to its own inherent law and not by the will of any Supreme Power or Deity, is divided into the ultimate, uncreated categories of Jiva (soul) and Ajiva (no-soul). There are an infinite number of souls, by nature perfect, possessed of the qualities of infinite perception, infinite knowledge, infinite power and infinite bliss. They are of the 'Divine Substance', and there is no Supreme or Universal soul over and above them. But with the exception of only a very few, they have fallen into the grip of Matter, the most important of the five divisions of Ajiva, their opposite number in the universe, and are being forced by it through an evil round of existence as Samsari or living beings. Matter is that 'which has not consciousness, but has touch, taste, smell and colour'. The soul's subjection

to it is the consequence of its own activity. Affected by attachment, aversion, affection and infatuation, the soul generatesa sort of magnetic energy and attracts to itself fine, infra-atomic particles of Matter, called Karma, which cloud its brightness and dull its consciousness. Karma, the immaterial principle of other Indian religions, is thus conceived of materialistically in Jainism. Its in-flow (Asrava) and fixation (Bandha) to the soul is the beginning of the latter's sorrows. Soon the gross body forms about it and the travail of Samsara commences.

The contact with Karma or Matter is therefore the bane of the soul and must be ended. The lower or material self must be subdued by the higher or spiritual self. The process naturally involves a two-fold operation—the checking of further in-flow of Karma (Samvara) and the scattering of Karma inherited from, and accumulated through, past lives (Nirjara). Liberation, Moksha, is the state when the soul sheds entirely the load of Karma and the two primary entities, Jiva and Ajiva, no longer stand in contact. The Jinist Way, leading to this Supreme Goal, is summed up in the 'Three Jewels' of Right Perception (Samyagdarsana), Right knowledge (Samyagjnana) and Right Conduct (Samyak-charitra). Right conduct, 'correct living in accordance with the light gained by the first two Jewels, must be such as to keep the body down and elevate the soul.' It must be conducive to Samvara and Nirjara and is conceived of as rigorous discipline of body and mind. The practical morality leading to Samvara includes, according to the standardised texts, adh erence to the five Great Vows (see below), observance of five Rules (Samiti) regarding eating, sleeping etc., Restraint (Gupti) of body, mind and speech, performing of pious duties (Dharma), contemplation (Anupreksha) and endurance of all kinds of hardships (Parisaha-jaya). Of the various virtues to be thus cultivated, the Jainas attach the greatest importance to Ahimsa, a natural corollary of the re-iterated dogma that every object, even the smallest particle, has a soul endowed with consciousness and capable of perfection.

The purging of accumulated Karma is Nirjara. Karma might exhaust itself by fructifying and leave the soul free. But this natural process of its maturing is a long one, and the falling off of Karma must be hastened by deliberate effort. The surest way of annihilating Karma is to practice penance (Tapas). Mortifying the phyical self is an attack on Karma and expels it from the soul before the time of its natural exhaustion. Janism thus greatly emphasizes the value of asceticism and extolls the practice of self-torture, fasting and even starving oneself to death.

Liberated from the thraldom of Matter, the soul 'at once rises to the top of the universe, above the highest heaven, where it remains in inactive omniscience and bliss through all eternity.' It recovers its pristine purity and power and exists in the state of Siddhahood (Perfection) 'without caste, unaffected by smell, without the sense of taste, without feeling, without form, without hunger, without pain, without sorrow, without joy, without birth, without old age, without death, without body, without Karma, enjoying an endless unbroken calm'.

In contrast with the Buddha's Middle Way, then, the Jaina doctrine attaches great importance to ascetic practices, seeing in them a quick means of salvation. The austere discipline of mortifying the flesh, decried by Buddhism, acquires cardinal significance in Jainism. The divergence between the Jinist and Buddhist points of view is reflected in some other aspects of the religions also. Thus, while Buddhism advocates the anatta (no-soul) theory, at least according to the traditinal schools, pluralism (i.e., belief in the existence of innumerable souls) is the basic tenet of Jaina metaphysics which credits even inanimate objects like stones, trees, mountains etc. with souls of varying degrees of consciousness. Buddhist Nirvana is defined as escape from existence while Jaina Moksha signifies the continued existence of disembodied souls in the state of perfection and bliss. The Jaina conception of Karma is materialistic while the Bauddhas regard it as an immaterial principle. The ideas about Matter vary considerably in the two religions and notions regarding Ahimsa and Aparigraha are not carried to the same extreme extent in Buddhism as in Jainism. The Buddha condemned the practice of nudity, so strongly emphasized by Mahavira, and asked his followers to itinerate 'properly clad.' Vital differences such as these gave rise to a state of considerable rivalry and opposition between the adherents of the creeds from an early time. Being the products of the same period of ferment, the teachings of the Buddha and Mahavira naturally displayed some similar features. The repudiation of the authority of the Vedas and the efficacy of their ritualistic cult was common ground between them. A pessimistic attitude towards life and world was shared alike by both which also agreed in their common subscription to the theories of Samsaravada and Kriyavada. Though emphasizing the superiority of the monk over the householder, both attached 'due importance to a moral and disciplined lay life as a preparatory or initial stage for liberation'. Jainism is a frankly atheistic creed recognising no Supreme or Universal Soul over and above the multitude of individual souls

and an atheistic strain is implicit in the Buddhist practical morality also. But these and similar likenesses were not sufficient to span the gulf that separated the two religions from each other. Originating as distinct creeds in the sixth century B. C. they drifted farther apart in the subsequent period and vied with each other for the patronage of the princes and people of India.

Tradition goes that the First Sermon, containing the essence of the above teaching, was preached by Mahavira almost immediately after his Enlightenment at a big sacrifice organised by the Brahmana Somilacharya and that on this occasion he converted eleven learned Brahmanas who later became his Ganadharas or head monks; but the truth of the tradition cannot be vouched for. It is, however, clear that soon the work of disseminating the faith began to make good progress and a large band of followers gathered round the Master. Like the Buddha, Mahavira led an energetic preacher's life, wandering about for nine months in the year and spending only the rainy season at one place, usually near, though not inside, some big town. The sphere of his itinerary was practically the same as that of the Buddha. He toured extensively in the central and upper parts of the Gangetic Valley where he preached in famous centres like Rajagriha, Vaisali, Mithila, Champa, Sravasti, Varanasi, Kausambi and many smaller places. The Jaina texts represent him as visiting Ahichchhatra and Hastinapura but this may be regarded as doubtful and the story of his going to Sauvira (Sind) is probably legendary. He scored the most important success of his preaching career when after a joint conference of his followers and those of Parsvanatha in Magadha, the latter joined hands with him and his leadership of the entire Jaina community was accepted by all. The Jaina works claim that he worsted a number of teachers in disputations including Makkhali Gosala whom he seems to have regarded almost as a personal rival. At one stage of his ministry, one of his

chief disciples, Jamali, deserted him with a small group of followers but this was probably only a minor defection and did not affect the progress of the faith. Persons of all classes and professions flocked to Mahavira for salvation. Like the Buddha, he got encouragement from kings like Ajatasatru, Bimbisara and Udayana, though the Jaina claim that all these were converted to his religion is difficult to substantiate. The Lichchhavis of Vaisali gave him great support and the town seems to have become a stronghold of Jainism. The Mallas of Kusinara and Pava also seem to have held him in high esteem and provided him with a considerable number of converts. Before his death, the Jinist faith was well established in many parts of the Gangetic basin.

The Jaina Order of Monks was perhaps organised by Mahavira on lines somewhat different from those of its Buddhist counterpart. While in the Buddhist Sangha all members of the Church were technically equal down to the youngest full monk, Mahavira placed the mass of his followers under the charge of *Ganadharas* or heads of groups, making these responsible for their proper instruction and discipline. As noted above, Jaina texts require us to believe that there were as many as eleven *Ganadharas* in the time of Mahavira but the correctness of the number cannot be vouched for. It was probably understood, if not actually ordained by the Master, that the oldest of the monks would succeed him as the Head of the Church and thus, in contrast with the Buddha's refusal to appoint a successor, there was perhaps an official hierarchy in the Jaina Church from the very beginning. The Jaina Order had also a women's wing of its own. In Mahavira's day it is said to have been headed by the pious nun Chandana.

The monks led a life of considerable hardship and were expected to undertake severe penance with a view to aiding the natural process of *Nirjara*. They ate as scantily as possible and frequently nothing at all. The more determined of them even starved themselves to death, a practice supposed to generate great merit. Numerous other forms of religious austerity were practised. The round of self-mortification began with the commencement of the novitiate when the aspirant's hair was plucked out

instead of being shaved in the usual fashion. In their communion with fellow living beings the monks had to strictly abide by the Five Great Vows (*Panchamahavrata*) of *ahimsa*, (non-injury), *satya*, (truthfulness) *asteya* (not stealing or not taking what is not freely given), *brahmacharya* (strict sexual chastity) and *aparigraha* (not having any property). The greatest emphasis was laid on *ahimsa* which was made to include not only the non-injury or non-killing of living beings, but also the abandonment of all such acts which may unintentionally lead to the destruction of human or animal life. The monks moved about naked, preaching to those who did not shy away from their nudity. In the growth of religious nudism in India, Jainism has been the most important factor.

The Jaina texts assert that Mahavira established the Orders of laymen (*upasaka* or *sravaka*) and laywomen also at the same time as those of monks and nuns, thus completing the structure of the Four-fold Community (*Chaturvidha-Sangha*). The Uvasagadasao, one of the important canonical texts, gives the names of the ten most important lay devotees of Mahavira all of whom are said to have been rich and sincere to the faith. That the lay following of Mahavira included many opulent bankers is revealed by the Buddhist works also and upto this day the dominant element in the Jaina lay Order is that of the tradespeople. The lay-folk in the religion of Mahavira were bound more firmly to the monks, the active exponents of the creed, than in Buddhism. They were more distinctively Jaina than the Buddha's laymen were Buddhists. As far as possible they tried to practise the monkish virtues in life and some of them were even given a special type of initiation (*Diksha*) enabling them to lead a full-fledged monk's life for short periods of time. It appears from certain texts that they were expected to withdraw all support from religious mendicants of other faiths and ignore them as far as possible. As the *Ayaranga Sutta* puts it, "to friendly or hostile heretics, one should not give alms, drinks, dainties and spices, nor do them service." One would like to believe that this precept was laid down, not by the high-minded prophet, but by some of his less enlightened followers. The laymen were expected, like the monks, to be scrupulous in the observance of *ahimsa*, though they could hardly be required to move about, as the latter sometimes did and still do, with a piece of cloth tied to their mouths and with a broom to sweep the ground clean before sitting down in order to prevent injury to insects.

The ministry of Mahavira lasted for thirty years and at the age of seventy-two he entered *Parinirvana* at the little town of Pava near Rajagriha. Traditions are not unanimous about the date of his death, but it probably occurred in 468 B. C[25]. It is stated in the Jaina *Kalpasutra* that the Lichchhavis, Mallas and other republican clans of Kasi-Kosala, at this time offering cambined resistance to the forces of Ajatasatru, instituted

a festival of lamps to commemorate this important event. According to some, this was the origin of the *Dipavali* (Diwali), the great Indian Festival of Light. But there is no sufficient ground for this assumption.

The history of Jainism in the centuries following the death of Mahavira is very imperfectly known. But enough remains to show that like their Buddhist rivals, the Jaina monks also continued to make efforts for the diffusion of their faith and acquired considerable success. Before the beginning of the Maury period, the religion had probably spread to Pundrvardhana (North Bengal) and a substantial Jaina community had been established there. In the south-east, votaries of the faith were already to be found in the country of Kalinga where the religious establishments seem to have been rich in icons and relics. A strong Jaina community was founded at Mathura and there is some reason to believe that a Jinist centre came into existence at Ujjayini in Malwa also. The Nanda kings appear to have been patrons of Jainism.

The question has repeatedly been asked if it was the purpose of the Buddha and Mahavira to found new religions or if their movements were only reformist growths within the fold of Brahmanism itself. In our opinion, there is little reason to doubt that the former represents the correct view of the matter. The frontal attack that these teachers made on the two cardinal aspects of Brahmanism, viz., sacrificial ritualism and the caste system implying the superiority of the Brahmanas over the other classes, their great proselytizing enthusiasm, their anxiety to find support among laymen and the unmistakable hostility with which they were regarded by many Brahmanas strongly suggest that they did not aim at merely reforming the evils of the Vedic faith but were making conscious efforts to set up new systems in rivalry and opposition to it.Attention has been drawn to the fact that much of their fundamental doctrine, specially of Buddhism, may be traced in the Upanishads which occupy a very high place in the religious literature of Brahmanism. But we have seen above that the Upanishads are the product of a period of upheaval and much of the thought embodied in them was common ground between the Brahmanical and non-Brahmanical teachers of the time. Inspite of their strong reformist tendency, the Upanishads did not totally repudiate the authority of the Vedas; neither did they, as a rule, deny the

Brahmana claim of superiority. It was this factor which appears, more than anything else, to be responsible for their gradual acceptance as orthodox texts of great sanctity by the Brahmanas. Buddhism and Jainism lacked this saving grace and as such were marked with the seal of heterodoxy from their very inception.

B. BRAHMANISM

The rise of Buddhism and Jainism in the 6th century B. C. adversely affected the popularity of the orthodox Brahmanical religion. But it must not be supposed that the latter all at once lost it permier position and was relegated to the background. Inspite of the early success of the heterodox teachers and their disciples it still remained the most widely respected creed and claimed a very large following in the country. It was only during the next period that the Imperial patronage of Asoka and the vigorous efforts of the Brotherhood carried Buddhism to the top and the faith of the Vedas was overshadowed.

Brahmanism had by now advanced far along the lines it had been following since the Later Vedic period. The picture that the texts reveal is of a highly formalised and pretentious religion which evoked considerable opposition in many quarters. The grand sacrifices, classified as *Soma Yajna* and *Havir-Yajna*, were now much more elaborate and complicated than even in the previous epoch.[25] The slaughter of animals had come to be the central feature of most of them and the budget for their celebration added to a tidy total. In the domestic ritual, the essential part was still played technically by the householder himself but in actual practice professional Brahmanas had frequently to be employed to assist in these also. The householder was expected to be scrupulous in the celebration of the Five Great Sacrifices *(Panchamahayajna)* [27] and the seven periodical rites known as *Pakayajna* (Simple Sacrifice).[28] Numerous ceremonies, some of them of a simple and others of an elaborate nature, were prescribed to mark the various stages in the growth of the ir dual. These embraced the entire course of his life from the time conception in the mother's womb to death and afterwards. *Garbbadhana* was a ceremony intended to cause conception; the *Pumsavana* was meant to secure male progeny; the *Simantonnayana* consisted in the ceremonial parting of the wife's hair by the husband as a mark of pregnancy. These pre-natal ceremonies were followed by the *Jata-*

karama (birth rite), *Namakarana* (naming), *Annaprasana* (first feeding) and *Chudakarma* (cutting the hair). With the *Upanayaua*, the boy passed into the stage of *Brahmacharya* or studentship and left his parents' house to take up his abode with the *guru* or preceptor. Actual studies were preceded by four ceremonial vows undertaken for studying the different branches of the Vedic literature. The completion of studies was marked by the *Samavartana* ceremony which enabled the student to return to his home. The most important of the personal rites was *Saddharmacharinisamyoga* or marriage with which the individual entered the world, took up a profession and became an active member of society.

The fourteen ceremonies from *Garbhadhana* to marriage along with the five *Mahayajnas*, seven *Pakayajnass* seven *Haviryajnas*, and seven *Somaynjnas* constitute the conventional list of the forty *Samskaras* or sacrements that all pious Hindus were expected to receive. Needless to point out that the list represents idealized reality. In practice all the personal rites could hardly have been celebrated and the detailed rules laid down in the texts followed by everybody.

The numerous magico-religious cults of pre-Aryan India had been completely integrated into the fabric of Brahmanism. Special rites of a magical nature were prescribed for propitiating demi-gods, averting evil influence, washing away sin, curing disease, bringing harm to enemies and the like. Amulets as safeguards against calamities were much in demand. Divination by interpretation of dreams and omens was undertaken by many Brahmanas whose services were frequently requisitioned by the credulous. Laying of ghosts had become a lucrative trade and the *Bhutavidyacharyas* —probably enjoyed a wider practice than the more conservative Brahmanas who only officiated at sacrifices.

It will, however, be wrong to suppose that increasing degeneration alone characterised the history of Brahmanism in the period under review. Evidence is on record that while on the one hand the creed had reached a stage of almost petrified formalism, on the other it registered new developments which probably did much to stem the ebbing of its popularity. The most important of these was the beginning of the practice of image-worship. We have seen above that the religious traditions of the Indus Valley people were iconic but there is no clear proof that the incoming Aryans made idols or representations of

their gods. The adoration of idols is a custom quite unknown to the *Brahmanas* which lay down the details of the Vedic ritual in a minute fashion. The beginning in this direction was probably made about the same time as the rise of the heterodox sects and may have been one of the factors which saved the Brahmanical religion from being completely swamped by them. It has been pointed out that the Sankhayana Grihya Sutra (IV, 19-2-3) probably refers to the images of *nakshatras* and icons of Indra, Agni and Rudra. 'Similarly, in Paraskara, there is a reference to the besprinkling of seats and shrines (for the images of gods) in the ceremonies in connection with a newly built house.' The Greek writers depose that an *image* of Heracles (Vasudeva-Krishna) was carried before the armies of Porus in the battle of Jhelum and during the next period the Maurya rulers made additions to their exchequer by exhibiting and selling images of Siva, Skanda and Visakha. With the growth of iconism the allied cult of temples also began to make headway. A Persepolis inscription of the time of Xerxes I (C. 485-465 B. C.) claims that the Persian king *dug up the foundations of gods' places*. This is taken by some as an allusion to the destruction of temples in N. W. India and the adjoining borderland which formed part of the dominions of Xerxes. 'Gods' houses' are mentioned in some places in the *Grihya Sutras*. No actual specimens of these early temples of India have survived and it is not definitely known if the present association between temples and icons had been established as early as this. The main focus of religion was still the sacrificial fire through which oblations were offered to invisible gods. But once they appeared on the scene, images and temples caught the fancy of the people and gradually became firmly established in the religious life of the country. With the efflux of time the sacrificial act receded into the background and *puja* (image-worship) became the basic form of religious ritual. It was another triumph scored by the indigenous tradition of India ever the exotic one imported by the Aryans.[29]

C. THEISTIC MOVEMENTS : BHAGAVATISM AND SAIVISM

Both Buddhism and Jainism were fundamentally atheistic religions. They emphasized the possibility of emancipation through spiritual advancement acquired by one's own earnest exertion and denied that any external agency, godly or otherwise, can be of any assis-

tance in it. But this was not the only tendency which came to the forefront in the fervent re-adjustment of ideas in the period about and after the sixth century B. C. Quite opposed to it, there also arose another type of movement which was founded on the theistic basis of the adoration of a personal god as the Supreme Divinity. The cardinal point of its religious theory was the doctrine that salvation is possible through the God's *Prasada* (Grace) alone and that the only way of attaining this is intense personal devotion to Him (*Bhakti*). The supporters of this viewpoint thus emphasized the emotional aspect of religion and, like the Buddhists and Jainas, rejected the efficacy of the Vedic rites and ceremonies. Their chief representatives at this early period were those who worshipped the gods Vasudeva-Krishna and Rudra-Siva in the spirit of adoration.

The deified Vasudeva-Krishna had already developed into a major god. He is not specifically mentioned in the *Sutras* or early Buddhist and Jaina literatures, but is noticed by the Greek writers under the name Heracles. Megasthenes informs us that Heracles was worshipped by the inhabitants of the plains and was held in special honour by the *Suraseni* (i.e., the Surasena people) through whose territory flowed the river Jobares (Jamuna) and whose chief towns were known as Methora (Mathura) and Kleisobora (probably Krishnapura or the town of Krishna.) As stated above, the Alexander historians record that an image of Heracles was carried in front of the army of Poros when it opposed the Macedonians on the bank of the Jhelum. It is thus clear that Vasudevism or Bhagavatism had already spread from the place of its origin, the Jamuna region, to the north-west. The diffusion of the creed to the north-west is also borne out by a Sutra (3.98) of the *Ashtadhyayi* of Panini (of Gandhara, probably 4th century B.C.) which defines the word *Vasudevaka* as one 'whose object of *Bhakti* is Vasudeva.' It is generally agreed that *Bhakti* here probably, though not certainly, is to be taken in the sense of religious adoration. It would thus appear that Vasudevism had already become a religion of devotion to a personal God. It is not improbable that the idea of *Prasada* or Grace had also originated by now and the worshippers of Vasudava believed that the God's compassion would liberate them from the cycle of *Samsara*.

The theistic movemement associated with Rudra-Siva also became quite vigorous at an early date. We have seen above that already

in the age of the Later Vedas, this divinity had acquired a position of great importance and was regarded as highest among the gods by a section of the people. In our period his popularity seems to have increased further and he secured a firm hold over certain classes of the population. Megasthenes speaks of a god named Dionysus who, along with Heracles, held a high place in the veneration of the Indians. The ambassador informs us that his worshippers lived mostly on mountains and were given to certain practices which may be described as Bacchanalian. 'They dressed in muslin, wore turbans, used perfumes and arrayed themselves in garments dyed of bright colours.' It is further stated that the north-western people called Oxydrakai (Kshudraka) regarded tnemselves as descended from Dionysus for 'the vine grew in their country and their processions were conducted with great pomp and their kings on going forth to war and on other occasions marched in Bacchic fashion with drums beating.' The general consensus of opinion seems to be that under the name Dionysus Megasthenes has noticed the god Siva, though some regard his identification with Samkarshana (Balarama) as more probable. Rudra-Siva was apparently forg ing ahead of the other gods of the Vedic pantheon and his worship was acquiring increasing vogue in the different regions of the country. The devotees who adored him as the Supreme Divinity probably went by the name of Siva-Bhagavata which later gave place to the appellation Saiva, Mahesvara or Pasupata.

From the beginning, the theistic sects were nearer to Brahmanism than Buddhism and Jainism and may with justification be described as new growths inside its pale. But there is some reason to believe that at first the attitude of the more orthodox Brahmanas towards Vasudeva-Krishna and his cult was not wholly friendly. Attention may be drawn to a 'reviling scene' in the Santiparvan of the Mahabharata which shows that Vasudeva's claim to divine honour was challenged by some as he was not a Brahmana [30] and "even in the Gita Vasudeva-Krishna laments that the magnanimous person who says 'Vasudeva is all' is rare and people scorn him." The tenets of Vasudevism involving the worship of a deified human being were perhaps not to the liking of the staunch followers of the Vedic religion who were by training and inheritane inclined to the mechanical worship of impersonal gods. The idea of the deification of a non-Brahmana was also evidently distasteful to some members of

the priestly class who were more impregnated with the prejudice of caste than the others.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. There were a number of factors leading to the rise of this pessimistic outlook. In the 'native population' of the country there was naturally a strong feeling of despondency and unhappiness caused by its political subordination and social and economic degradation. Among the Aryans themselves the break-up of the old tribal structure was causing a sense of insecurity and possibly also of regret. Towards the close of the Later Vedic period money came into vogue and, as as is well-known, the rise of money economy may lead to acute distress for the lower classes. The philosophical pessimism of the time was obviously inspired largely by such socio-economic conditions.

1a. Supra, p. 72. Also pp. 173-4.

1b. e. g. in the Chhandogya Upanished Ghora Angirasa is seen to lay great emphasis on ahimsa or non-injury. PHAI 6, p. 355.

2. The best known of these is Makkhali Gosala who was the founder of the Ajivika sect. His doctrines bore a general resemblance to that of Mahavira though there was no love lost between two great teachers of the time. Like Mahavira, Gosala was also an atheist and belived in the separate existance of soul and matter. Unlike the former, however, he was an uncompromising determinist. He emphasized the incapacity of action (karma) to influence the course of man's life and spiritual progress and taught that every thing is predetermined by an inexorable Fate (Niyati.) He was also an advocate of extreme asceticism. He appears to have been quite popular in his time and we read in the Anguttara Nikaya, 1, 33, that the Buddha regarded him as the most influential of the non-Buddhist teachers. The sect founded by him lasted upto C. 1000 A. D. Little enough is known about the teachings of the other 'heretics,' though Ajita was probaly an annihilationist, Pakudha Kachchayana an eternalist and Sanjaya an agnostic. Besides these, there were other important teachers who had their own following. Among these mention may be made of Nigrodha, Vachchhagotta, Potaliyo, Ajita, Bhaggavagotta and others who are said to have met the Buddha in discussion. Devadatta, the traditionally wicked cousin of the Buddha, also founded a sect of of his own which was in existence upto at least as late as the Gupta period. Some idea of the great intellectual commotion of the time may be gained from the fact that according to the Pali texts there existed as many as sixty-two different sects including Ajivikas, Jatilakas, Munda-Sravakas and Gotamakas The Jaina works give the number of sects as 368. The extreme deversity of the views held by

these is well illustrated by the Mahabodhi Jataka which mentions five schools of philosophy, viz. Ahetuvada (non-causality), Pubbekatavada (belief in the present state being the result of past actions), Ukkhedavada (annihilationism), Issarakarnavada (belief in God as the creator and dispenser) and Khattavijjavada (Militarism, a vague term which seems to stand for a selfish attitude to life.)

2a. Ante, pp. 71-72 Also post, pp. 173-74

3. Supra p. 67

3a. The general attitude of the heterodox thinkers to the authority of the Vedas is reflected by the Buddha's observation that the rishis of old like Vamadeva, Atthaka, Vessamitta and others who are connected with the Vedic hymns had never seen Brahma.

4. Some scholars are inclined to believe that as the intellectual stir of the sixth century B. C. affected the entire civilised world, its origin is to be traced to a single common source. But no satisfactory attempt has been mace to pin down this 'source.' Elliot Smith holds that it was probably the expansion of Egyptian influeuce through the agency of the Phoenicians but the view has found little support from others.

5. The title raja applied to Suddhodana does not signify a hereditary monarch as commonly supposed. Among the Sakyas, Vajjis and other republican tribes of the Gangetic valley it was borne by the heads of all aristrocratic families who were the real rulers of the state. The Head of the State, who was an elected dignitary, also had the same title. In later Buddhist works Suddhodana is usually represented as the powerful hereditary king of the Sakyas. The Buddhacharita of Asvaghosha calls him nripa and vasudhadhipati, in the Lalitavistara he is a Maharajadhiraja!

6. E. J. Thomas, however, points out that there are no clear allusions to the marriage of the Buddha in the Tripitaka and the names Rahula (as the son of the Buddha) and Yasodhara (Bimba etc.) also do not occur there. See his Life of Buddha as Legend and History, pp. 59-60.

7. Samyak drishti, samyak samkalpa, samyak vak. samyak karmanta, samyak ajiva, samyak vyayama, samyak smriti and samyak samadhi.

8. The number of the links in the 'Chain of Causes' is not always uniform. In some places only seven of them are enumerated.

9. Nirvana literally means 'blowing out.' But its exact connotation is doubtful. Many scholars take it to mean the exinction of the flame of Tanha (Desire) which leads to Samsara. Others put an annihilationist interpretation on it. The former appears to be the more probable view. There are stray passages in the Pitakas which describe Nibbana in a more or less positive way as a state of bliss and rest. The idea of Nibbana, however, was

supposed to be incommunicable as 'the Infinite cannot be expressed by Finite words.'

10. The most notable of such attempts is the one made by Mrs. Rhys Davids. Cf. her Sakya or Buddhist Origins and Buddhism.

11. Tachabina, The Ethics of Buddhism, p. 91

11a. Cf. the highly interesting passage in the Chhandagya Upanishad, i. 12, which compares Brahmanas to dogs moving round in a circle, each holding the tail of the preceding dog in its mouth and singing, 'Om let us eat! Om let us drink! Om may the gods Varuna, Prajapati and Savitri bring food to us!'

12. About the role of the Buddha as a social reformer opinion is sharply divided. According to Cunningham, 'we must not look upon the Sakyamuni simply as a founder of a new religious system but as a great social reformer who dared to preach the perfect epuality of all mankind and the consequent abolition of ca te.' Oldenberg, on the other hand, says, 'We can quite understand how historical treatment.........has attributed to Buddha the role of a social reformer who is conceived to have broken the chains caste and won for the poor and humble their place in the spiritual kingdom which he founded. But anyone who attempts to describe Buddha's laoburs must, out of love for truth, resolutely combat the notion that the fame of a such an exploit, in whatever way he may depict it to himself, belongs to Buddha.'

13. AIU, p. 370.

14. In its finally evolved form, the Buddhist Sangha was the totality of the numerous local viharas or avasas which functioned throughout the country. Each one of these was an independent unit and was also denoted by the word Sangha. There was no hierarchical order in the clergy or a standing central body or Head of the organisation. Whenever any grave issue arose, a general council of the 'Sangha of the Four Quarters' was convened at some important centre. But this was rare and only four such councils were called in ancient India.

The membership of the Church was open to all persons above the age of fifteen excluding certain enumerated categories such as criminals, lepors, debtors, runaway slaves etc. The name of the person who wished to enter the Church had to be proposed formally by a senior monk and approved by the chapter of the vihara. The first ten years of the novitiate were of total dependence on the upajjhaya or preceptor who was held responsible for his trainee's proper development and education. At the end of the period the aspisrant was released from the tutelage of the preceptor and took his place as a full member of the community.

As members of the Fraternity of the Buddha's monks, all the recluses enjoyed the same rank and had equal rights and responsibilites. All matters pertaining to the maintenance, discipline and development of the viharas were regulated by the common assembly of the monks in which an extremely democratic and business-like procedure was followed. There were definite rules for moving a resolution (natti). The proclamation of the resolution in hand seems to have been known as anussavana or kammavacha. Some resolutions were moved only once (nattidutiya) and some thrice (natticharutttha). If the assembled monks kept quite over the resolution it was taken as carried. In the case of difference of opinion, the sense of the house was taken by open voting (vivataka) or secret ballot (guhaka). For the latter purpose, sometimes sticks (salaka) of different colours were used and the teller was techanically known as salakagahapaka. Majority decided the issue. Even sick or absent monks were required to record their vote (chhanda) by proxy. If a matter was considered particulary important, it was sent to a select committee (ubbahika) of chosen monks who were sometimes, though rarely, taken from a neighbouring vihara. If the select committee failed to arrive at any decision the matter was referred back to the Sangha. The proceedings of the assembly seem to have been duly reorded by specially appointed bhikkhus.

15. Thomas, op. cit. p. 111.

16. The eight strict rulers are; (1) a nun, even if of a hundred years' standing, shall salute a monk and rise up before him, even if he has been just ordained, (2) shall not spend the vassa in a place where there are no monks, (3) twice a month shall ask for the time of the Uposatha and and the time when a monk will come to ordain her, (4) shall hold the pavarana both in the assembly of monks and nuns, (5) some of her offences shall be dealt with by both assemblies (6) when she has been a novice for two years, shall ask for ordination from both assemblies (7) shall not abuse or rebuke a monk on any account and (8) is forbidden to make official statement to a monk though the reverse is not prohibited.

17. Cf. the story of the Buddha's meeting with the Brahmana farmer Kasibharadvaja in Magadha. It is said that when the farmer was ploughing his field and distributing food, the Buddha approached him for alms. The farmer's reply is significant. 'I plough and sow and having done so, I eat. Do you, ascetic, plough and sow, and then eat.'

18. Tachabina, op. cit., p. 109.

19. The traditional date of the Buddha's Parinirvana is given as 544-3 B. C. But it has been conclusively shown by Fleet, Geiger, Wickeramsinghe and others that the Buddhavarsha of 544 is a medieval fabrication and the real date the Master's passing falls about fifty years later. Fleet gives the actual day as 13th October, 483 B. C. (JRAS, 1909,

pp. I ff.) Takakusu and others, relying on the 'dotted record of Canton' fix the date at 487 or 486 B. C. But, as pointed out by C. D. Chatterji, considering the crude method of keeping account of time, it is not improbable tha a mistake of about 3 years has crept into the Canton record (B. C. Law Volume, Part 1, p. 607 n.).

20. The account of the first council (Sangiti) is found in such texts as Chullavagga, Mahavamsa, Dipavamsa, Samantapasadika and Tibetan Dulva. Though the details of the council given by the various authorities do not always agree, it is impossible to hold with Oldernberg that 'it is not history, but pure invention.' A full refutation of the view of Oldenberg will be found in *Buddhistic Studies*, ed. B. C. Law, Chapter II. As pointed out by Mrs. Rhys Davids, it is highly improbable that 'such an event as a concerted gathering on a large scale is only a faked record......I have yet to learn that the historicity of any of the seven (or eight) chief Ecumenical Councils of the Christians has been questioned.' *Buddhism*, p. 713. According to a recent view, the council was an enlarged Patimokkha assembly.

21. The authorities for the second council are the same as for the first.

22. The traditional list of the 'Ten Indulgences' is as follows: (1) carrying one's own salt-cellar, (2) dining after the sun has reached two minutes p. m., (3) eating left-over food after dinner, (4) separate 'sabbath' celebration within one circuit, (5) making tentative decisions prior to the official ones, (6) performing without leave what one's teacher does, (7) drinking milk if it is turning sour, (8) drinking toddy before fermentation, (9) keeping a rug beyond prescribed size and (10) accepting and using gold and silver coins. Mrs. Rhys Davids compares these to the points debated at the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople. *Buddhism*, pp. 214-5.

23. The more important branches of Theravada are Sarvastivada (Vaibhashika), Mahisasaka, Sammitiya or Vatsiputriya and Sautrantika. Among the sects that branched off from the Mahasanghikas mention may be made of Purvasaila, Aparasaila, Uttarasaila and Chaityaka. The traditional founder of the Mahasanghika school is Mahakassapa.

24 The principal innovations of Mahavira were (a) addition of the fifth vow of Brahmacharya or celibacy to the four already prescribed by Parsva and (b) insistence on nudity.

The credit for systematising the philosohical beliefs of the Nirgranthas is also to be given to him.

25. The date of Mahavira's Parinirvana is a debated one. According to texts like Vicharasreni, Harivamsa Purana and Vividha-Tirtha-Kalpa, the Master died 215 years before the accession of Chandragupta Maurya. As the Jaina date of the latter event is 313 B. C., this would give 528 B. C. Assuming that the first Maurya began his rule about 320 B. C., we get c. 536 B. C. It is, however, difficult to reconcile these conclusions with the fact that in Jaina works Mahavira appears to be represented as a contemporary both of Seniya (Bimbisara) and Kuniya (Ajatasatru), the latter of whom mounted the throne about 490 B. C. The probability of truth seems, therefore, to lie with another tradition, recorded by Hemachandra in his Parisishtaparvan and Bhadresvara in his Kahavali, which places the death of the prophet 155 years before the accession of Chandragupta, i. e., in 468 B. C., according to the Jaina date.

26. The main difference between the Soma and Havish sacrifices seems to be that the former was characterized by the additional offering of Soma and killing of animals. The seven Somayajnas are : Agnishtoma or Jyotiragnishtoma, Ukthya, Shodasin, Vajapeya, Atiratra and Aptoryama. The Haviryajnas are : Agnyadheya, Agnihotra, Darsa-paurnamasa, Agrayana, Chaturmasya and Nirudhapasubandha.

27. The Mahayajnas were offered to Brahman, manes, gods, goblins and men. "Teaching (and studying) is the sacrifice to Brahman (Brahmayajna), the offering of water and food called Tarpana the sacrifice offered to the manes (Pitriyajna), the burnt oblation the sacrifice offered to gods (Devayajna), the Bali offering the sacrifice offered to goblins (Bhutayajna) and the hospitable reception of guests, that offered to men (Purushayajna)."

28. The Pakayajnas are : Ashtaka, Sravani, Agrahayani, Chaitri, Asvayuji, Parvana and Sraddha.

29. It is now generally believed that *puja* was originally a Dravidian practice.

30. *Sabhaparvan* (42-6). "Fool, if he is really the creator of the world, as you take him to be, why does be not call himself a Brahmana in the proper way ?". Dr. Raychaudhuri also points out that in Mbh., ix, 60-23, Vasudeva is represented as a pious hypocrite, given to *dharmachchhala*.

CHAPTER IV

Social and Economic Conditions

A. SOCIAL.

By the end of the period under review the process of the fragmentation of the Indian people into exclusive social groups, separated from each other by numerous barriers, was already fairly well advanced. There now existed a well developed 'theory of classes' and the relations between the various groups were sought to be regulated by codified laws. For the first time in the *Sutras*, which may be taken to relate roughly to this period, we come across the terms *dvijati* (twice-born) and *ekajati* (once-born) signifying the setting up of a dead limit beyond which the Sudras may not advance socially and notions about defilement by touch, *commensality* and *connubium* are also seen to acquire a definite shape. From time to time there were protests raised against the hardening of class prejudices, specially by the Buddhists, but these proved ineffective and the rigidity of social distinctions went on increasing.

The superiority of the Brahmanas over the other classes was well established now and in the *Sutra* literature we find the claim made that 'a Brahmana, though only ten years old, and a member of the kingly class, though a hundred years old, must be considered as father and son, and of the two, the Brahmana is the father.'[1] Occasionally, specially in the eastern part of the country, the Kshatriyas still denied the pretensions of the Brahmanas and we find the Buddhist writers giving the palm to the Khattiyas (Kshatriyas)[2] in the social scale. But it is clear from the Buddhist literature itself that even in the east the Brahmanas were regarded as belonging to a superior class by the people in general.[3] The priestly group now claimed, at least in theory, exmeption from taxes and also from many kinds of legal punishment including the death penalty. At the other end of the system, the position of the Sudras registered a marked deterioration. It was formally ordained by the *Sutrakaras* that if a Sudra 'asumes a position equal to that of the twice-born men in

sitting, lying, conversation or on the road, he shall undergo corporeal punishment' and, for similar offences, severer penalties were prescribed for the 'once-born' than for persons of the higher classes. Among the 'twice-born' themselves legal distinctions were sought to be introduced, contemplating increasing privilege in accordance with the ascending scale of *Varna*. The iniquitous theory of *Varna* was now assailing even the domain of civil law.

The *Sutra* works reveal an important aspect of social organisation on which the earlier texts throw comparatively small light. In addition to the four geat classes, they name a number of *Jatis* (castes) clearly showing that within the pale of the *Chaturvarnya* there existed distinctions which added greatly to the complexity of the soial structure. The *Sutras* explain the presence of the 'castes' by a convenient general theory of indiscriminate marriage, both of the *anuloma* and *pratiloma* type. It is, for example, held that an Ambashtha is the son of a Brahmana father by a Vaisya mother; a Karana is the product of wedlock between a Vaisya male and a Sudra female; a Chandala is the issue of a Sudra father and Brahmana mother; the offspring of the marriage of a Sudra male with a Kshatriya female is Vaidehaka; if the father is a Vaisya and the mother a Kshatriya, the issue is a Magadha and so on so forth. The explanation is obviously a puerile one and can account for, if at all, the emergence of only a very few of the numerous 'castes' that were to be found in India from a quite early time. The purpose of those who advanced it, inspite of its glaring inadequacy, was apparently to emphasise the fundamental character of the *Chaturvarnya* as the ultimate source of all social phenomena. The real origin of the castes (*Jatis*) is to be traced to a complexity of factors—occupational, racial, tribal, social and even geographical. A perusal of the list of 'mixed castes' as found in the Sutras distinctly reveals that some of them, e. g. Vaina, Suta and Dhivara, were occupational in origin. Others, such as Nishada and Chandala, were originally non-Aryan tribes who had found a place in the basement of the Aryan society; still others, such as Magadha and Ambashtha, apparently got their names from the places of their origin. Most, if not all, of the above named castes, were of non-Aryan extraction. Among the Aryans themselves the various professional or functional groups such as the *lauhakaras*, *charmakaras*, *kumbhakaras*, *napitas* etc., belonging mostly to the Vaisya class, were graduacly evolving into compact, exclusive units with a strong corporate sense and

assuming the form of castes. Indian society had thus developed a highly complex organisation in which social relations were regulated as much by the consciousness of caste (*Jati*) as by the classification of *Varna* (class). By their very nature, castes (*Jati*) are self-multiplying and it is this tendency inherent in them which has led to modern India being a concourse of numerous units (about 3000, or 500 according to some, counting the major *Jatis* and their further sub-division), functioning as more or less exclusive social groups. *Varnas* are static; their number has always been four. But castes (*Jatis*) are dynamic entities with a strong propensity to increase in number though there has been frequent amalgamation also and many old castes have eventually disappeared. The process of the formation of new castes was sufficiently vigorous uptill quite recent times and is still operative in some backward areas and sections of population.

About this time we also find the other distinctive features of the 'caste system' fast emerging into view. The lawgivers now ardently advocated marriage within one's own *(savarna)* social group and 'wives of equal caste, wedded according to approved rites' were held up as ideal. It was only by slow degress that the viewpoint of the *Sutrakaras* could gain the full appoval of society and we have good evidence that the practice of inter-class marriage had not completely died out even upto the begining of the medieval perod. Indeed the very explanation of the 'mixed castes' given by the *Sutras* is clear proof that such marriages were neither few nor far between in the age represented by them. Unable to prevent the 'indiscriminate' marriages altogether, the lawgivers tried to regulate them and the general rule laid down was that a person may take a wife from a caste lower than his own (*anuloma vivaha*) but not from a higher one (*pratiloma*). But with the efflux of time the ideal of *endogamous* marriage gradually gained strength and at the begining of the next period we fiind Megasthenes noting that 'no one is allowed to marry outside his caste.'

The law-books prescribed definite vocations and callings for the different classes and permitted deviation from them only in case of severe economic distress *(apad)*. As a rule, a Brahmana was to study, teach, offer sacrifices for himself and others, and give and receive alms. The duties of the Kshatriya were to study, offer sacrifices, govern, fight and give alms. The Vaisya was

to study, sacrifice, give alms and take up agriculture, trade, cattle breeding or money lending. The Sudra was to serve the upper classes as a slave or servant but, alternatively, he could also make his living by practising the mechanical arts. An examination of the exant record leaves no doubt that the rule regarding the professions could not be strictly enforced and was frequently violated in practice. Even in the Madhyadesa where the words of the lawgivers carried greater weight than elswhere, Brahmana heroes are represented as taking a leading part in famous combats. In the eastern regions we find Brahmanas and Kshatriyas in almost every walk of life, earning their livelihood by occupations and trades assigned to the Vaisya and Sudra classes.[6] In N. W. India, the Brahmanas of the lower Indus valley took up arms in defence of their land against the Macedonains and the Sordai (prabably a Sudra people) also did the same. Among the various rules governing the Hindu social organisation, the one regarding the choice of profession was the least respected in practice and even in medieval or modern India when the caste system had attained its fullest development persons of higher caste are seldom known to have lost status by adopting professions not strictly appropriate to their *Varna* except the very 'lowest' ones such as those of sweeper, butcher, cobbler etc. The exi gencies of economic life made it impossible to set up any invoilable standards in this respect—a fact which the lawgiverse themselves recognised by providing 'escape clauses' of *apaddharma*. But it is not that the Sastric injunction on the point exerted no influence whatever on real life. If it could not develop into a rigid social law like the one which ultimately put an end to inter-class marriage, it certainly succeeded in creating a marked prejudice against the 'contamination of professions.' One of the features of Mauryan India which attracted the notice of Megasthenes was that no one could exercise any art or calling except his own.

The *Sutras* and early Buddhist works reflect a society in which restrictions on food and touch were operative, though not in the same rigid form which they acquired later. As pointed out above, there is no trace of such restrictions in the Rigveda and in the Later Vedic works also they are purely ceremonial. But in the *Sutras* and Buddhist texts, the taboos are seen to affect the ordinary life of the people itself. Though food prepared by Sudra cooks under proper supervision and conditions of cleanlines was not entirely banned by the *Sutrakaras*, they did impose some limitations on the taking of

food from Sudra hands by persons of the higher classes,[7] and even the drinking of water brought by a Sudra is stigmatised by some of them. The Sudras were not the only ones to be thus stamped with the mark of inferiority. By and by the evil began to affect the position of the higher classes also and we find at least one *Sutrakara* (Apastamba I. 6. 18. 9) forbidding the Brahmana who has returned from his teacher's place to eat in the houses of persons belonging to other castes including Kshatriyas. It is the logical conclusion of this tendency that to the modern Brahmana the Kshatriyas and Vaisyas are also partial untouchables, and he will not take certain types of food prepared or touched by them. Among the Brahmanas themselves such distinctions may be noticed, traceable ultimately to supposed or real gradations of ceremonial purity. While the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas and the majority of Sudras were never fully degraded and mere contact with them was not regarded as defiling by the Brahmanas, a more virulent form of untouchability was observed by the higher classes in respect of certain groups of people such as the *Chandalas*, *Nishadas* and *Paulkasas* who were looked down upon as perfect outcastes and whose very touch was considered to be a source of pollution. The pitiable plight of such people is clear both from the *Sutras* and Buddhist literature. 'It is sinful to touch a Chandala, to speak to him or to look at him' says Apastamba (II. 1. 2. 8-9). 'Even on touching persons who have touched a *Chandala* one shall purify himself by bathing dressed in his clothes' (Gautama XIV. 30). We read in the *Chittasambhuta Jataka* that a merchant's daughter washed her eyes with scented water on seeing two *Chandalas* and turned back from the place as she considered the sight an inauspicious one. In the *Setaketu Jataka*, a Brahmana tries to run away from a *Chandala* lest the wind after touching the *Chandala's* body should touch his own. Numerous other instances of this type may be cited from orthodox and unorthodox literature alike.

It will be seen thus that by the time the period of the early *Sutras* drew to a close, the 'caste' system was already fixed in all its essential ingredients and the social organisation of India had come to be more or less what it is to-day.[8] Subsequent periods witnessed a great increase in its rigidity and ramification but there was no further development of a fundamental nature.

While the social behaviour of the individual was determined by

his caste, attempts were also made to mould his own life in accordance with a pattern which the law-givers considered to be a perfect one. It was during this period that the theory of the 'Four Stages' *(asramas)* which had already made its appearance in a somewhat less developed form in the older Upanishads received its final shape. To the three existing *asramas*, a fourth one, that of *Sannyasa* or Renunciation, was added and the four were now formulated as a series of successive stages leading to the fullest development of the individual's life and spirit.[9] The underlying idea may have been partly to save society from the evil effects of premature asceticism to which the rise of the heterodox sects seems to have given great encouragement and partly to enhance the popularity of Brahmanism by giving a place to the new ideas within its fold. It is certain that, like much else ordained by the lawgivers, the theory of the *asramas* remained more an ideal than a reality. In actual life there were a large number of people who did not or could not fulfil the conditions of the first *asrama* and the vast majority never thought of entering the third and fourth ones. Though we do hear of some princes or other individuals passing from the householder's stage to that of the forest-dweller, the Rule of the Stages never developed into a decisive factor like caste in Indian society. As the description of an historical reality, the appellation '*Varnasramadharma*' is largely a misnomer. Caste alone constitutes the steel-frame of the Brahmanical social set-up.

The historically effective *asrama*, that of the householder during which the person concerned remained an active and enthusiastic member of society contributing to and taking part in its communal and economic life, began when the individual entered a profession, married and set up a household. The great diversity of customs and economic conditions prevailing in the country had given rise to various types of marriage of which the classified eight forms give a good idea.[10] Girls were married off with or without dowry, priests acquired wives as part of their sacrificial fee, and brides may be purchased by paying a price which may sometimes be only a nominal one in the form of a cow and a bull. Rarely, as to-day, a daring soul, specially of the kingly class, might carry off by force his intended wife from her parents' home or a rash lover might seduce a girl while asleep, mentally deranged or drunk. The law-givers disfavoured such conduct but wisely made provision to legalise its consequences.

Clandestine marriages were sometimes arranged by willing parties who seem to have considered the mere plighting of troth sufficient to solemnise them. In kingly and noble families, the practice of marriage by *Svayamvara* (choice of the husband by the girl herself) was in vogue though only a few actual cases of it are on record.

The *Sutrakaras* enjoined upon women a life of total dependence on, and subservience to, their male relatives. If the lawbooks alone be taken as the basis of judgment, the womenfolk of the time would appear to be a helpless, depressed lot, totally lacking in initiative or achievement. But such a picture is largely falsified by the stories given by the Greek writers of the gallant part taken by some women of the north-west in the fight against Alexander and the numerous allusions to the culture, heroism and intellectual attainments of ladies in the Epics and Buddhist works. As against the injunction forbidding women to study the Vedic literature, we have the positive evidence of Panini who refers to women students of the Vedic *Sakhas* and also of Katyayana mentioning *Upadhyayis* or lady teachers. The beautiful psalms of the *Therigatha* were composed by nuns who had evidently received high liberal education in lay life.

Though the *Sutras* do not recognise *Sati* or the self-immolation of the widow on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband, the testimony of the Greek writers shows that the custom was already in evidence in some warlike tribes of the north-west. It is stated that among the Kathioi the wife burnt herself to death with the dead husband; and the practice was prevalent in the Taxila region also. But there is no indication that the custom had a wide vogue even in the north-west. Similarly, in the Epics some ladies of high rank are represented as observing *purdah* but this was evidently only a courtly custom which did not affect the lives of women in general. As a rule, the *Sutrakaras* did not approve of the remarriage of widows but did not altogether ban it and even accorded their sanction, though reluctantly enough in this case also, to levirate (*niyoga*) if a widow desired offspring but did not wish to remarry.

Some free peoples of the north-west did not favour slavery. Onesicritus, a companion of Alexander, tells us that it was non-existent among one of them. But numerous references in the Sutras and early Buddhist works clearly show that slaves were by no means an unfamiliar sight in the other parts of the country.

'Slavery might be incurred through capture, commuted death sentence, debt, voluntary self-degradation or judicial punishment.' At all times the Indian slave (*dasa* or *dasi*) was more of a domestic servant than a labourer in the fields or industrial establishments and never became the backbone of the economic system as in some other slave-owning civilisations of the world. The treatment he received in his master's house was, generally speaking, a humane one. 'A man may go short himself' says Apastamba (ii, 4, 9) 'or stint his wife and children but never his slave who does the dirty work for him.' The master possessed the power to beat, imprison, brand or ill-treat the slave and a few cases of harshness are on record, but these may be regarded as exceptions to the general rule. Not unoften slaves were manumitted or bought their redemption by monetary payment. In some of the sacred books manumission of slaves is extolled as an act of merit.

In spite of the inevitable depressive effect of the increasing petrifaction of caste, the social life of the country still retained much of its wonted gaiety and colour. The lawbooks banned the consupmtion of garlic, onion, mushroom, village cock, pig and many other species of animals and birds but it is difficult to say how far such taboos were effective in practice. Vegetarianism was now slowly making headway, specially due to the advocacy of the Buddhists and Jainas, and we find some of the law-givers enjoining 'abstention from animal food of any kind.' But meat, including beef, was still largely eaten and the slaughter of cows, bulls and other animals was compulsory in some ceremonies, specially those connected with the manes. Singing and dancing were common amusements of men and women and were practised extensively. While manly sports like hunting, racing and wrestling were much appreciated, sedentary pastimes like gambling, chess-playing and listening to stories of war and romance also attracted many people. There were frequent *samajas* or festive gatherings of which the main features were combats of animals, acrobatic feats and consumption of meat and liqour. Many kinds of intoxicating drinks were known and though the Brahmanas were expected to be restrained in their use of them the other castes had greater freedom in the matter and evidently made good use of it. Prostitutes were not unknown. In the early Buddhist texts we read of some prominent public women of the time leading a life of high respect and luxury.

B. ECONOMIC

It was in the early period of Magadhan ascendancy that the urban factor started becoming effective again in Indian life after the remote days of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro. The growth of cities which had been in evidence since the Later Vedic age advanced apace in the centuries immediately preceding the foundation of the Maurya empire and brought about a considerable reorientation of the economic factors in the country. Early Buddhist literature refers to six important cities of the time of the Buddha, viz., Champa, Rajagriha, Sravasti, Saketa, Kausambi and Varanasi. Among the other flourishing towns of the period mention may be made of Vaisali, Mithila, Ayodhya, Sahajati, Pratishthana, Ujjayini and Mathura. The city of Pataliputra at the confluence of the Ganges and the Son.. was founded some years after the death of the Buddha but soon developed into the most stately town in the east and became the political centre of North India. The best known town of the north-west was Takkasila (Takshasila) in the Rawalpindi district of the Punjab and numerous smaller 'cities' dotted the Indus basin. The presence of the cities soon began to effect a basic change in the peoples' outlook which may be well exemplified by the contrast between the Brahmanical and Buddhist literatures. While the former is of an unmistakable rural character, the latter is marked by an easily recognisable urbanity and refinement. It is the literature of the New Age.

The accelerated pace of urbanisation was both a cause and a consequence of the unprecedented growth of trade and commerce which this period witnessed. The great cities stood at the termini or cross-roads of commercial highways which now sprang into existence to link up the different regions. The eastern towns, including Rajagriha and Pataliputra in Magadha, were connected by well established routes with Takshasila in the north-west on the one hand and Pratishthana on the Godavari on the other and the smaller cities and trading centres in the interior had also now the benefit of easier communication than before. The more prosperous land merchants used wagons or bullock carts for the conveyance of their merchandise and were known as *sarthavaha* or caravan traders. The caravans were sometimes quite large, consisting of as many as five hundred wagons and, besides the trading and clerical staff, also included a number of armed guards for protection against robbers and bri-

gands who infested the highways. In traversing the difficult route across the Rajputana desert to the ports of Sauvira, merchants often engaged the services of land-pilots *(thalaniyamaka)* who conducted the caravans safely to their destination. A good part of the inland trade was river-borne. The Ganges and its tributaries provided a great thoroughfare across Upper India along which goods are known to have been transported as far as Champa and Tamralipti to the south-east and Sahajati and Kausambi in the north-west. The Indus and other navigable rivers were also utilised by trading parties. Generally speaking riverine trade seems to have been regarded as more paying and less risky than the overland commerce by the merchants of the time.

Backed by the flourishing inland commerce, the external trade of the country also registered a marked progress. Traders from the Indus Valley passed along the Kabul and over the Hindukush into the Oxus region, which hummed with the activity of businessmen from many lands, and also visited the West Asian towns through more southerly routes to which a reference has already been made. The principal maritime ports were Tamralipti (West Bengal), Surparaka (North Bombay), Bhrigukachchha (Broach) and Pattala (Sindh) from where enterprising tradesmen undertook hazardous trips as far as Baveru (Babylon), Suvarnabhumi (Burma and the countries to the south-east) and Tarmraparnidvipa (Ceylon). The sea-going vessels were of considerable size and well fitted to face the perils of the ocean. Some of them are represented to have measured as many as eight hundred cubits in length, six hundred in breadth and 20 fathoms in depth and to have accomodated seven hundred cavalry along with their horses. These figures may be exaggerated, but they do suggest that the Indian navigators no longer feared the open sea and undertook commercial expeditions to distant countries. The export trade consisted mainly of fine textile, ivory, armour, embroidery, perfumes, drugs, spices and gold.

As a means of exchange barter had not fallen into total disuse. But the extended internal and foreign trade of the country necessitated a less cumbersome medium and we have definite evidence that there was now a regular currency which was gradually becoming common. It is a moot point if the gold *Satamana* and *Nishka* of the Vedic works ever acquired the full characteristics of coins, but there is no doubt that the copper *Karshapana* mentioned in the texts of this period was

a coin, weighing about 146 grains. Silver was also used for currency and there were two types of silver coinage in circulation, namely, the *Satamana* and the *Karshapana* (also known as *Purana* and *Dharana*).[11] The silver *Satamana* weighed 180 grains and the *Karshapana*, about 58 grains. There were lesser denominations also, relating to both the currencies. The silver *Masha* or *Mashika* weighed onesixteenth of the *Karshapana* and it is pointed out that large silver coins of 20 and 30 *Mashas* were in use. The copper *Masha* was trimmed to the weight of about 9 grains and there were large coins of copper also, besides a quarter *Masha* or *Kakani* weighing about 2·25 grains. None of the early silver or copper coins had any legends or portraits. They were small pieces of metal, beaten flat and irregular in shape, and bore marks made with punches at different periods whence the name 'punch-marked coins' is usually applied to them. Some earlier authorities on the subject believed that coinage in India was of private origin and that the punches were marks or emblems of the moneyers or guilds who manufactured the coins. But the opinion is now more general that from the earliest time the Indian currency was a state enterprise and that some of the punches represent the issuing authority.

The growth of commerce and the rise of money economy enabled the top-ranking merchants to amass huge fortunes and exercise some control over the trades and professions. Bankers (*setthis*) like Anathapindika of Sravasti and Ghosha or Ghoshita of Kausambi who flourished in the Buddha's day, were the first capitalists of India and wielded considerable influence at the courts of the great rulers of the time. Social balance was now being affected by the rapid formation of a middle class, owning comfortable houses in the towns and leading a cultured life within its moderately adequate means. The expression '*gahapati*' frequently met with in the Buddhist texts seems usually to signify a person of this class, though it is sometimes employed to denote merchant princes like Anathapindika also.

The rate of progress in the field of industry and craft was maintained and there was a steady advance in the direction of specialisation. In the Buddhist works, there are frequent references to 'eighteen handicrafts' (*sippas*) such as those of the smiths, leather-workers, potters, wood-workers, ivory-workers, stone-cutters, painters, weavers, jewellers, ship-builders and garland-makers. Some of the crafts were considered to be degraded (*hinasippa*) and were evidently practised

only by low-caste peoples. These included hunting, trapping, fishing, butchery, tannery, rush-weaving, snake-charming and the like. The textile industry had made considerable advance and in the *Grihya Sutras* we hear of four different kinds of Indian cloth, viz., *Kshamira* (flax), *Kshauma* (hemp), *Karpasa* (cotton) and *Urna* (woollen). An extensive mining industry had come into existence. Large quantities of gold, silver, copper, tin, lead and iron were dug out and converted into articles of utility.

Specialisation naturally tended to lead to localisation. We now hear of whole villages populated by people practising one craft only (such as iron-smiths, wood-workers, weavers, potters etc.) and in the cities not infrequently the different crafts were concentrated in particular lanes and streets *(vithi)*. It was this tendency towards localisation which ultimately led to the emergence of certain regions as special centres of particular industries in the Maurya period. Indeed the beginning in this direction had already been made and some regions (e. g. Banaras and Sibi) were well known for manufacture of good cloth. The major professions and crafts were organising themselves into guilds or corporations *(Sreni, Sangha or Puga)* under headmen called *Pamukha* or *Jetthaka (Pramukha* or *Jyeshthaka)*. The guilds not only protected the interests of their members and increased the efficiency of the craftsmen but also gave excellent opportunity to novices for acquiring training in the different arts. The term '*antevasika*' occurring in the literature of the period no doubt signifies a system of apprentices receiving technical education under the auspices of a guild of craftsmen.

While the cities pulsated with the breath of prosperity, the backwater life of the villages was hardly touched by the new economic developments and already displayed something of that static quality which became more and more prominent with the passage of time. More details are available now, but nothing in the extant record suggests that there was any marked change in the culture or economic standards of the village-folk. Agriculture formed the backbone of the country's economy and the importance of it may be judged from the fact that the *Sutras* make provision for many simple agricultural rites, such as the furrow-sacrifice and the threshing-floor sacrifice, appropriate for the different stages of corn-growing. The ancillary business of stock-breeding was also properly attended to and prayers and rites for prosperity in

cattle are to be frequently met with in many places in the *Grihya Sutras*. But there is no proof that any noteworthy advance had been made in the basic processes of farming and cattle-rearing over the Later Vedic period. There was a good deal of collective activity in the villages; the setting up of fences, digging of channels, building of mote-halls, roads etc. were regarded as works of communal responsibility in which the womenfolk also participated. Forest land and pastures were held in common by the villagers and in some parts of the north-west even 'communal farming' was in evidence. The villages did not display much economic disparity or distinction of class. 'The economic conditions in the villages were simple. None of the householders could have been what would now be called rich. On the other hand there was a sufficiency for their simple needs, there was security, there was independence. There were no landlords, and no paupers.'[12]

C. LITERARY PROGRESS

The period in question was one of great creative literary activity. Brahmanas, Buddhists and Jainas alike devoted themselves to the production of religious literature and a beginning was also made in the field of secular literature. The main Brahmanical works of the age are the *Sutras* which are contained in the *Kalpa Vedanga*. The traditional threefold division of the *Sutras* is into (a) *Srauta Sutra* which lays down the rules for the performance of the grand sacrifices, (b) *Grihya Sutra* (lit. domestic manual) which deals mainly with the minor ceremonies meant to be observed by the householder daily or periodically and (c) *Dharma Sutra* dealing with the sacred and secular law. This division has not always been strictly observed with the result that there is a considerable amount of overlapping and interlapping. A part of the *Srauta Sutras* goes by the special name of *Sulva Sutra* and lays down the rules for the building and measurement of altars and sacrificial areas. As a rule, the style of the *Sutras* is extemely condensed, devoid of all literary merit and eminently unreadable for all but those for whom the texts are specially meant. It bears the distinct stamp of rusticity and in some places in the texts living in cities is expressly condemned. The [illegible] ritualist evidently dreaded the enlightenment which was spreading through the cities as fatal to his trade and the general superstition on which his prestige was founded. The date of all the *Sutra* works cannot be accurately fixed, but the *Dharma Sutras* connected with the names

of Gautama, Baudhayana and Apastamba are generally assigned to our period.

The Buddhist monks began the composition of the great body of canonical literature known as Tripitaka or Three Baskets. Tradition has it that two of the Pitakas, the *Sutta* and the *Vinaya*, were compiled soon after the death of the Buddha at the council of Rajagriha and the growth of the Baskets was finally closed with the production of the Kathavatthu, the most important text of the third Pitaka, the *Abhidhamma*, by Moggaliputta Tissa at the time of the third council at Pataliputra (C. 244 B. C.). The tradition may not be accepted in its entirety, but it is generally thought that the bulk of the *Vinaya* and *Sutta* Pitakas had been composed before 350 B. C. and that parts of the *Abhidhamma* also existed before 250 B. C. In his Bhabru Edict, engraved probably in c. 248 B. C., the emperor Asoka is seen recommending to the notice of the Buddhist clergy seven texts some of which have been identified with portions of the Pitakas. References to persons well versed in sacred books are found in some inscriptions of the second century B. C.

The Sutta Pitaka, dealing with the doctrines and fundamentals of Buddhism, is divided into five Nikayas or collections, namely, *Digha*, *Majjhima*, *Samyutta*, *Anguttara* and *Khuddaka*. The last of these is a work of miscellaneous character and contains, among others, the famous texts Dhammapada, Suttanipata, Theragatha, Therigatha and the Jatakas. The Vinaya Pitaka embodying the rules of monastic life and discipline is divided into three parts, viz., Sutta Vibhanga, Khandhakas and Parivara or Parivarapatha. The Abhidhamma Pitaka deals with practically the same subjects as the Sutta Pitaka, 'but in a more scholastic fashion, adding definition, classification, categories etc.'

The Pitakas were composed in Pali, Magadhi and other dialects but only the Pali version has come down intact to us. Like the *Sutras*, the Pali canon possesses very little literary merit and is mostly written in a cut and dry style of dialogue and discourse, with stock phrases and lengthy descriptions occurring again and again. But to some extent its ethical contents and the frequently interspersed narrative rescue it from the boring monotony which is the bane of the *Sutras*. Some of the texts, such as the Therigatha, contain moving pieces of considerable artistic merit, displaying a deep love of Nature.

The Jainas also started building a religious literature about the same time as the Buddhists. The existing canon of the Jainas, composed in the Arsha or Ardhamagadhi Prakrita, consists of the twelve *Angas*, twelve *Upangas*, ten *Prakirnas*, six *Chheda Sutras*, four *Mula Sutras* and four *Miscellaneous Texts*. But this great corpus of literature belongs exclusively to the Svetambara sect and was finally settled in the present form in a council held at Valabhi in the fifth century A.D. It is certain that in a modified and adapted form it incorporates many old texts which were redacted at earlier councils and some of which may actually go back to Mahavira and his disciples. But it is not possible at present to separate these from the rest though it is generally held that the *Acharanga Sutra*, the *Sutrakritanga* and the *Bhagavati Sutra* contain much original matter.

Far more important than the growth of the *Sutras* and the Buddhist and Jaina literatures from the standpoint of literary history is the beginning of the Epic literature of India which must also be placed in this period. Most writers believe that the literary tradition of the Epics 'represents the viewpoint of the Kshatriyas against that of the Brahmanas' and that the Ramayana and the Mahabharata 'may be regarded as the last remnants of a vast Kshatriya literature which was distinct in its origin from the Brahmanical literature.' Originally the Epics were probably purely heroic tales such as are known to have existed among other branches of the Indo-European community. But it is obvious that they were frequently redacted and retouched by priestly authors who, in adapting them to their systems, interpolated passages on ethics, ritualogy, religion, philosophy, statecraft and many allied subjects which have partly obscured the original character of the works.

In their available forms, both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are products of literary activity spreading over a number of centuries. Competent authorities believe that the Ramayana assumed its final shape by the second and the Mahabharata, by the fourth century A. D. But the original nuclei of both go back to a much earlier period. The Mahabharata is alluded to by Panini and the *Asvalayana Grihya Sutra* knows of both Bharata and Mahabharata as sacred books. It would appear from this that by the fourth century B. C., if not earlier, the floating tradition about the Great War of Kurukshetra had already been embodied in a literary text which

was the kernel of the present collection of about a hundred thousand stanzas. As regards the Ramayana, its original core which probably depicted Rama as a human being rather than a divine incarnation, is assigned by various authorities to periods ranging from the 6th to the 3rd century B. C.

The Epics are the first secular literature of India. Didactic portions apart, they are composed in a vigorous, lucid style and are marked by robust characterisation and easy flow of narrative. Their influence on subsequent literary development is unmistakable. Classical Sanskrit poetry, narrative poetry, drama and even prose are indebted to them in many ways. Their style and metre became the standard for didactic works of all types, including the *Dharmasastras* and the *Puranas*. Their inexhaustible fund of stories and ballads is frequently drawn upon even by modern writers.

An important literary work of the period when the Epics were still in their infancy is the *Ashtadhyayi* of Panini. The celebrated grammarian belonged to a village called Salatura in the N. W. F. Province and composed his great work of about 4000 *sutras*, divided into 8 chapters, mainly with a view to describe the *Bhasha* or the current language. The date of Panini is not definitely known. He is placed by some as early as the seventh century B. C. while others would bring him down to the fourth century B. C. The latter view is probably near the truth than the former. According to some writers, Yaska's *Nirukta*, the oldest Indian text on linguistics, which deals with the meanings and derivations of obsolete Vedic words, also dates from the fifth century B. C. Others suggest a somewhat earlier date for the *Nirukta*.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Vishnu, XXXII, 17.

2. In most Buddhist works, we find the Khattiyas mentioned before the Brahmanas in the enumeration of Varnas. In the Ambhattha Sutta, the Buddha says: "The Khattiya is the best of those folk who put trust in lineage." In Jataka 1, 49. we find it stated that 'in the present age' the Kshatriyas occupy the highest status.

3. "Such a Brahmana (i.e., a learned and virtuous one) must be allowed by the king immunity from the following six: he must not be subjected to

corporal punishment, he must not be imprisoned, he must not be fined, he must not be exiled and he must not be reviled, nor be executed". (Gautama VIII, 12-13).

4. N. K. Dutt, origin and Growth of Caste in India, p. 179.

5. Ibid., pp. 166-67.

6. In the Dasabrahmana Jataka, we find the Brahmanas engaged in many kinds of works and professions such as those of physician, text-collector, trader, policeman and hunter. Kshatriyas are not infrequently shown as working as farmers, traders and even artisans.

7. "What has been brought by an impure Sudra must not be eaten, not what has been brought at night by a female slave. If during his meal a Sudra touches him, then he shall leave off eating. One must not eat the food offered by an artisan, a physician, a usurer, a washerman, an outcaste, a wine-merchant, a spy, a hunter, a cobbler etc."

8. The first stage is that of Brahmacharya when the initiate is to leave the house of his parents and take up his abode with his chosen guru (preceptor) to devote himself to study. The Brahmacharin may be either Upakurvana (i.e., for a period only after which he may enter the householder's state) or Naishthika, i.e., a life-long student and celibate. The second stage is that of Garhasthya which begins when the Brahmacharin, after returning from the preceptor's place, marries and sets up a family. In the Garhasthya, he must study the Vedas (adhyayana), perform the rites and ceremonies enumerated above (pp. 162-3) and give charities (dana). When well advanced in middle age and when he has seen his children's children, he enters the third stage, Vanaprastha (lit-forest-dweller or forest hermit). In the hermitage, he is to maintain the three fires and offer the five daily sacrifices. He should never enter a village except for begging and that too after the householders have taken their meals. As far as possible, he should try to survive only on fruits, roots, leaves etc. and should put on garments made of barks and skins. The last stage is that of the Sannyasin (homeless wanderer). The Sannyasin is to lead a life of complete detachment and austerity, without pleasure, without protection, without rites and even 'without the Vedas'. He takes the scantiest amount of food and puts on only rags or garments discarded by the people. His sole aim is to 'seek the Atman' or the soul. He must develop an attitude of complete indifference to the world and its pleasures and shed all partiality for his (former) family and relatives.

9. Brahma denoted the marriage of a girl with a husband of the same caste with the appropriate ceremony and a proper dowry. In the Prajapatya the girl was given away by the father without a dowry or without a price. In the Arsha, there was a token bride-price consisting of a cow and a bull. A marriage was called Daiva when 'the bride was given away by the father to a priest as part of his sacrificial fee'. Gandharva

may be rendered as love-marriage and was usually contracted secretly. Asura marriage consisted in propitiating the guardians of the girl with money, i.e., virtually purchasing her. The Rakshasa wedding involved the carrying away of the girl by force or violence. If the girl was seduced while sleeping or in a mentally deranged or drunken state, it was Paisacha marriage. Megasthenes tells us that the gift of a yoke of oxen was customary in Indian marriages. This shows that the Arsha marriage was not a mere theoretical ideal, but a reality. Nearchus refers to the selection of Indian maidens as brides by victors in tournaments of boxing, wrestling, races and other sports. This was a feature of Svayamvara.

10. For the various authorities bearing on the subject, see Altekar, Origin and Antiquity of Coinage in India, JNSI, XV, pp. 165. It is in the period represented by the Sutras and early Buddhist works that we have first definite evidence of the use of coinage in India. Dr. Altekar draws our attention to twelve silver pieces, found along with jewellery, in a silver casket in the Indus Valley excavations. One of these bears an inscription in Cuneiform. It may be that the pieces in question are an embryonic currency but nothing definite can be said on the subject.

11. Rhys Davids, Buddhist India, p. 201.

12. By the sixth century A. D., both the Epics were well known in Cambodia (Indo-China) and the Mahabharata of 100000 stanzas is mentioned in Gupta inscriptions.

PART III

THE AGE OF THE MAURYAS

CHAPTER I

Chandragupta Maurya and Bindusara

A. LIFE CONQUESTS OF CHANDRAGUPTA

Justin relates how an Indian so offended Alexander, apparently somewhere in the Punjab or Sind, by his bold speech, that he was ordered to be put to death and had to save himself by fleetness of foot. The story may or may not be true but the intrepidity and enterprising nature of the person about whom it is told are above doubt. He is no other than Chandragupta, the founder of the Maurya dynasty, whose name has been corrupted into Sandrocottus, Sandrokoptos, Androcottus etc., by the classical writers. Not many years had elasped since the departure of Alexander from the country when he began to rise in the political firmament and, before his reign of twenty-four years was over, he had earned his place by the side of the most notable rulesr of India. Born in comparatively humble circumstances, he lived to guide the destiny of a great empire which could repulse the onslaught of one of the most powerful Hellenistic monarchs of the time and which was, according to a common estimate of its extent, the age-old dream of one India actualised, nearly fully, in political fact. The dynasty originating with him quickened India to unprecedented endeavour in all fields and its impress is clear on several aspects of her history for many centuries.

Of the ancestry and social status of this remarkable person, we do not have a unanimous account from ancient traditions. In the *Mudrarakshasa*, a drama probably written about 600 A. D., and certain Brahmanical works, he is represented as a son, or a nephew, of the last king of the Nanda dynasty of Magadha whom he ultimately replaced and the dynastic appellation Maurya is explained as a derivative of *Mura*, the name of his mother or grand-mother. The general tendency of historical scholarship is now to reject this connection between him and the Nandas

as an imaginary one and to credit the Buddhist tradition on the point, describring him as a scion of an ancient Kshatriya tribe called Moriya (Maurya). The Moriyas can be traced in history as far back as the sixth century B. C. when they formed the ruling section of the small aristocratic republic of Pipphalivana, perhaps in the Gorakhpur District of U. P. About the middle of the fourth century, when Chandragupta was born among them, they were no longer independent. Like the other republicians of Eastern India they too had been overwhelmed by the wave of imperialism and their little state had been incorporated into Magadha. Justin says that Chandragupta was a person of 'humble origin.' *i.e.*, probably a commoner by birth, while in some late Buddhist works he is said to have been the son of a chief (*Raja*) of Moriyanagara (Pipphalivana?) who lost his life in a border fray. The two sources may be reconciled on the supposition that the son of a petty feudal chief may, with some justification, be described as a commoner, but that does not establish the trustworthiness of the Buddhist account which is not corroborated by any really old authority. About the early life and training of Chandragupta also we are in the dark, though the busy finger of legend has woven a web round it. The first recorded event of his life which *may* not be pure romance is his meeting with Alexander in the north-west in 326 or 325 B. C. Plutarch tells us that he was still a 'stripling' when he saw the Macedonian king and later he used to declare that the conqueror could easily have made himself master of India as the reigning king (the Nanda Emperor) was hated by his subjects because of his 'base' origin and wicked habits. From this it has sometimes been inferred that he was already playing an active refractory role in the Nanda Empire and the purpose of his visit was to advise Alexander to invade Magadha. 'His role may be compared to that of Rana Sangrama Simha who invited Babar to put an end to the regime of Ibrahim Ludi.' Though not improbable in itself, this conclusion is not supported by any positive evidence and Justin's testimony about the quarrel with Alexander, alluded to above, may even be taken to go against it. The suggestion has been made that the patriotic youth, then perhaps a student at Taxila, sought the interview to lodge a strong protest against

the unprovoked invasion of his country and yet another view pictures him as desirous of taking up service under Alexander but quarrelling with him. In the absence of clear information, speculation is unprofitable and we must not forget that the story of the meeting has been dismissed as a mere legend by some noted writers.

After the withdrawal of Alexander, the Indian scene began to change rapidly and Chandragupta was largely concerned in the change. Justin says that it was he who, on the death of Alexander, liberated India (*i.e.*, the Punjab and Sind) from the Macedonian yoke, putting her foreign governors to death. From the Indian side we learn that he ousted the Nanda dynasty of Magadha and occupied its capital, Pataliputra, a fact which the classical writers also attest indirectly by describing him as the king of Palibothra. He 'overran the whole of India', possibly as far as Northern Mysore in the South, and in c.305-4 B.C. he fought a war on the Indus with Seleucus Nicator, King of Syria, and probably won it. But the chronology of these events, of which the cumulative effect was to bring the Maurya Empire into existence, is still in an unsettled state. The expulsion of the Macedonians apparently preceded the encounter with Seleucus and so did, in all probability, the discomfiture of the Nandas, but it is a moot point if the Maurya hero first accomplished the overthrow of the Macedonians or the Nandas. Justin's account of the rise of Chandragupta, quoted in a note below, apparently makes the triumph over the Macedonians the first success of his life and it has been argued that 'the conquest of the Punjab by Chandragupta with forces from Eastern Hindustan has little inherent plausibility; before the British power the movement had been consistently in the opposite direction'. Many competent authorities are accordingly inclined to place the struggle with the Macedonians before the war against the Nandas and this may be accepted as a working hypothesis. There can, however, be no certainty on the point in our present state of knowledge and the opposite view has been emphatically maintained by some noted writers.

Though it is clear that the general trend of historical events in the Punjab and Sind subsequent to Alexander's retreat was towards the rapid enfeeblement and final elimination of the foreign rule, only fleeting and very indis-

tinct glimpses of these events are to be had from the sources at our command and to locate Chandragupta in the picture is not an easy matter. Alexander had been gone only a few months when one of the basic weaknesses of the Macedonian regime was sharply manifested in an important incident. Philip, the key-figure of the Greek rule in India, was murdered and the cause of the murder, according to Arrian, was 'an ebullition of undying jealousy between Greeks and Macedonians.' The retiring monarch received news of the tragedy in Carmania and sent back ward asking Ambhi of Taxila and Eudamus, the Thracian commander of the garrisons, to look after the satrapal office conjointly pending the appointment of the new governor Thus did one of the two Macedonians known to have enjoyed the full satrapal authority in India pass out of the picture and there is no clear indication that the promised substitute ever actually arrived. Before many years had passed, the other satrap, Peithon of Sind, too retired from the country. In 323 B. C. occurred the sudden and unexpected event of the death of Alexander at Babylon, unleashing the forces of disruption over the empire of which the 'cement was still loose,' and the ensuing contest for power led to two partition treaties, one immediately after his death (323) at Babylon and the other two years later (321) at Triparadisus in Syria. The report of the second treaty says that Antipater, the chief figure at Triparadisus and the Regent of Macedonia from 321 to 318 B. C., accommodated Peithon in the satrapy 'bordering on the Paropanisadae' (*i.e.* to the west of the Indus) and that 'of the adjacent kingdoms, he gave that which lay along the Indus to Porus and that along the Jhelum to Ambhi for it was impossible to remove these kings without royal troops under the command of a distinguished general.' Whether it was now that Peithon left Sind or the decree of his transfer was merely a formal recognition of a change already accomplished it is difficult to say. Diodorus and Curtius inform us that so far Asia is concerned, the assembly of Babylon did not more than ratify the arrangements already sanctioned by Alexander and it has been inferred from this that the re-adjustment may have been ordered by Alexander himself. We are not told clearly about any fresh arrangements for Sind; some historians are inclined to think that it had been liberated by the Indian revolutionaries while others, basing their

conclusion on the report of the acquisition of the 'kingdom along the Indus' by Porus, suppose that the lower Indus Valley was placed under that king's jurisdiction. In any case, it is clear that by the time of Triparadisus the Indian situation had materially changed. There no longer was any foreigner of the full satrapal status in India proper and the party in power in the empire virtually recognised the independence of the Indian kings, convinced of its inability to control them. The only notable representative of foreign rule who may still have been in the country after this is Eudamus. He is not called a satrap by any source and his official position is not clear as he is not mentioned in connection with either of the agreements. Half a dozen years later, he also quits the scene. In 317 B. C. or thereabout, before 316 in any case, he treacherously murdered an Indian prince who was his colleague—Porus according to one reading of a passage of Diodorous—and left the country with a number of war-elephants belonging to the victim to take part in the western conflicts. He did not come back. He fought on the side of Eumenes and was one of the first to be executed by the word of Antigonus. We do not know if it was his intention to return to the Indian charge and he had accordingly made his arrangements or he had quitted for good sensing the untenability of his position, but if there still were some Greek commanders and administrators in the country it seems unlikely that they held on to their stations for any considerable period and must have either speedily withdrawn or been wiped off. In this imperfectly known story of the decline of the foreign power, there is Chandragupta somewhere, but exactly where ? The conjectural estimates of his work vary greatly. While some imagine him as instigating the muntiny which killed Phi lip and thereafter fighting a great war leading to the possible liberation of Sind and the virtual emancipation of the Punjab before 321 B. C., others credit him only with 'plunging into the chaos of the Punjab after Eudamus' and ruhlessly putting to the sword 'such Macedonian prefects as still held their posts'. Though Justin's description of him as the author of India's liberation who enabled her to shake off the yoke of servitude from her neck by wiping out the Alexandrian perfects seems to suggest a more important role than merely swamping the unknown lieutenants of Eudamus, any attempt

at a precise definition of that role is beset with difficulties. That he ultimately became master of the Punjab and Sind which the Macedonians had held is accepted as a fact on all hands, but the mist of obscurity still hangs heavy over the steps leading to this.

There is not the slightest hint of knowledge about the struggle with the Macedonians in the accumulated mass of legends about Chandragupta in the Indian sources, these being focussed primarily on his other great achievement, the overthrow of the Nandas in Magadha. Of this, too, we have no systematic record. Garbled tradition, preserving only a faint memory of the great stir which the episode must bave caused at the time, is our only guide in the matter. The traditional story of Chandragupta's conflict with the Nandas is found in many early texts *e.g.*, the Puraras, the Kamandakiya Nitisara, the Mudrarakshasa and the Mahavamsa. It appears from these works that an astute Brahmana diplomat, Vishnugupta *alias* Kautilya, played an important part in the drama of the dynastic change in Magadha. Indeed he is represented as the moving figure behind the scene with Chandragupta only as a docile protege ; the Chandragupta legend in India is really a Kautilya legend, This is probably an over-statement and a product of the tendency, visible in Indian literature for quite early times, of exaggerating the role of Brahmna *purohitas* in political happenings. But at the same time we should not go to the other extreme, as some historians have done, and altogether deny the association of Chanakya with the downfall of the Nandas. His role is attested by such early authorities as the Puranas and the Arthasastra and could not but have been a real one, though at present it is difficult to say what exactly it was. The *Mudrarakshasa* and other texts speak of a king Parvataka or Parvatesvara as an important collaborator in the war against the Nandas. The identity of this ally is uncertain and the possibility of his being a legendary personage cannot be ruled out. Following a suggestion thrown out by F. W. Thomas, many writers identify him with Porus of the Punjab, but the theory involves serious difficulties. The *Milindapanha* represents the fight between Chandragupta and Nanda as a sanguinary one invloving a heavy loss of life and considering the military resources of the Nanda Empire, this appears quite plausible, though the figures given are fictitious.

Another important and well attested event of the life of Chandragupta is his encounter with Seleucus Nicator, the founder of the famous Syrian kingdom and dynasty. The furious scramble for power in the Greek world following the death of Alexander had finally led to the rise of Seleucus as the chief rival of Antigonus for supremacy in Western Asia. In 312 B. C., he recovered possession of Babylon and, after strengthening his position in the west proceeded to impose his authority over the eastern provinces. Reducing Susiana, Persis, Media and other places, he subjugated Bactria and soon his sway was established to the Jaxartes in the east. The eastern campaigns brought him to India also. At a date which must lie between 312 and 301 B. C. and which is generally taken to be 305-4 B. C., he advanced by way of the Kabul river and crossed the Indus behind which Chandragupta was waiting to give battle. Though we have no exact knowledge of his plans we may assume that he wished to recover the Punjab and Sind from where the Macedonians had been forced out but which they had probably never formally abandoned. Backed as it was by the resources of the vast territory from the Tigris to the Jaxartes, the force of his invasion must have been considerable, but he was pitted against much heavier odds than Alexander. The Punjab and Sind were no longer divided into small warring communities as in the day of Alexander but were part and parcel of the vast Maurya Empire embracing probably a good part of the Indian sub-continent and with a man of the calibre of Chandragupta at its head. It is a pity that the Indian sources are totally silent about this encounter between the Maurya king and Seleucus representing the clash of two great powers of the time and for our knowledge of it we have to depend solely on the testimony of the Graeco-Roman writers. Most of these writers make no allusion to a fight and speak only of the treaty concluded by the contending parties. Accordingly, many scholars, mostly European, hold that the two armies probably did not actually come to blows on this occasion. The general European view of the matter seems to be that while Seleucus, stationed on the banks of the Indus, 'was still trying to gauge the magnitude of the task before him, urgent summons reached him from his allies in Western Asia and considerations of self-preservation impelled him to retreat without fighting

securing as best terms as he could from Chandragupta.' We must, however, remember that there is at least one Graeco-Roman writer who speaks of actual war. Appianus informs us that 'Seleucus crossed the Indus and waged war on Sandrocottus, King of the Indians, who lived about that river, until he made friends and entered into marriage relations with him.' The statement of Appianus leaves no doubt that a war was fought and from what we know about the treaty closing the hostilities, it is permissible to infer that the Syrian king got the worse of it and was probably compelled to sue for peace. The terms were definitely unfavourable to him and in normal circumstances one would hardly imagine him agreeing to them without a decisive defeat. 'Not only was he compelled to give up all thought of further aggression in India, in exchange for a paltry present of five hundred elephants, made by Chandragupta, he had to part with a large tract of territory to the west of the Indus.' It is, however, possible that pressing developments in Western Asia induced Seleucus to abandon the conflict before it could be finally decided one way or the other and in the crisis he valued a force of elephants and the friendship of the Indian king more than the satrapies of Eastern Iran. The limits of the ceded territory are not clearly specified anywhere. Strabo, deriving his information from Eratosthenes, tells us:

'The Indians occupy (in part) some of the countries *situated along the Indus*, which formerly belonged to the Persians. Alexander deprived the Ariani of them and established there settlements (or provinces) of his own. But Seleucus Nicator gave them to Sandrocottus in consequence of a marriage contract, and received in turn 500 elephants.'

On the strength of the above passage some scholars have arrived at the conclusion that the ceded territory comprised only the eastern parts of the old satrapies of Paropamisadae, Arachosia and Gedrosia, lying along the Indus and populated by people of Indian nationality. It is held that in Paropamisadae Chandragupta received only Western Gandhara between the Kunar and the Indus; in Gedrosia, the land between the Median Hydaspes (identified with Purali) and the Indus and in Arachosia probably the tract to the east of an imaginary line 'starting from the Kunar river to somewhere near Quetta and then going to sea

by Kalat and Purali rivers.' In others words, according to this view, the Indian emperor got only the eastern parts of Afghanistan and Baluchistan-Makran. It is difficult to reconcile this conclusion with Strabo's own statement in another place that the Indians occupied 'the greater part of Ariana which they had received from the Macedonians.' In the inscriptions of Chandragupta's grandson, Asoka, the Yavanas, perhaps o the Paropamisadae-Kabul region bordering on the Hindukush, along with the Gandhras and Kambojas, are mentioned as a semi-independent people within the Maurya Empire and an Aramaic inscription of Asoka has actually been found in Laghman in the Kabul Valley. Considering the probable extent of Maurya rule under Asoka, it may not be unreasonable to infer that the sway of Chandragupta himself did not stop with the Kunar but probably stretched beyond it to the Hindukush. There seems no good ground to abandon the commonly accepted view that Seleucus transferred the satrapies of Paropamisadae (Kabul), Arachosia (Kandhar) and, partly at least, Aria and Gedrosia (Herat and Baluchistan) to him. 'The Hindukush now became the frontier between Chandragupta's provinces of Paropamisadae to the south and the Seleucid province of Bactria to the north.................... More than 2,000 years ago the first emperor of India entered into possession of that scientific frontier sighed for in vain by his British successors and never held in its entirety even by the Moghul Emperors of the 16th and 17th centuries A. D,[4].

The treaty was cemented by the contracting monarchs by a matrimonial understanding of which the nature has provoked a discussion. The general opinion on the matter appears to be that Chandragupta married a daughter of Seleucus. Against this it is argued that in the known family circle of the Syrian king there is no room for Chandragupta as a son-in-law and that the expression 'epigamia' used by Strabo in this connection may signify only a 'convention establishing a jus connubi' between the two royal houses without actual marriage. But the statement that Chandragupta got the territory 'in consequence of epigamia' leaves the impression that the Maurya emperor espoused a Greek princess, acquiring the satrapies by way of dowry, and the word employed by Appianus, kedos, does imply actual marriage. The

lady in question need not necessarily have been a daughter of Seleucus though she was obviously a clcse relative. The marriage ushered in an era of peaceful and amicable relations between the two neigbouring powers, the Seleucids and the Mauryas, now meeting each other about the eastern limit of Persia. Seleucus despatched Megasthenes as his ambassador to the court of Chandragupta at Pataliputra where the observant, though somewhat over-credulous, envoy collected a large amount of information about India and incorporated it in into his Indica. Chandragupta, on his part, is know to have sent presents to Seleucus, including some powerful aphrodisiacs. The friendship thus established was continued by the successors of the two emperors.

The successful fight against the Macedonians, the overthrow of the Nanda king and the repulse of Seleucus were probably not the only political achievements of Chandragupta. Plutarch tells us that he 'overran the whole of India' with his army .of 600,000 men. The details of this extensive warlike activity are not known, but, when it was over, Chandragupta found himself presiding over a vast dominion stretching from the Indus to Bengal and the Arabian Sea and, possibly, including a considerable part of South India. The inclusion of Western India as far as the Arabian Sea in his empire is indubitably proved by the Junagarh Inscription of the Mahakshatrpa Rudradaman (150 A. D.). The epigraph informs us that the famous Sudarsana Lake in Kathiawar was constructed by the Vaisya Pushyagupta, a Rashtriya in the service of Chandragupta. The evideance for South India is not equally unassailable and doubts have been raised about Chandragupta's connection with it by some historians who are inclined to ascribe its conquest to the Maurya king's son and successor, Bindusara. As no contemporary estimate of the extent of Chandragupta's rule is available—Megasthenes is silent on the point and no help is forthcoming from the Arthasastra—final opinion on the subject is not possible, but on the present showing the case for Chandragupta appears fairly strong. Justin refers to him as 'in possession of India' and Plutarch, as we saw, credits him with 'overrunning the whole of India.' The Mahavamsa speaks of his installation in the 'sovereignty of Jambudvipa' by Kautilya. Vague though these indications are, they leave the impression that the rule of the first Maurya was not confined to the north

but extended over a good part of India south of the Vindhyas. This impression gains somewhat in strength from the testimony of an inscription discovered in Mysore which says that Nagarakhanda in the Shikarpur Taluk (Mysore) was protected by the 'wise Chandragupta, an abode of the usages eminent Kshatriyas.' The epigraph in question is a late one, dating from the fourteenth century, but its corroborative value cannot be overlooked. Finally, if the Nanda predecessors of Chandragupta ruled in Kuntala, the possibility that he inherited some southern possessions from them has also to be kept in view. Taking all this into consideration, we may provisionally accept the conclusion, supported by many, that Chandragupta's authority extended over the south also. In the time of Asoka, the Maurya Empire reached upto at least Northern Mysore and it may be assumed that the whole of this southern territory was included in the empire from the time of Chandragupta himself. Jaina literary tradition seems to connect him with Sravana Belagola in Central Mysore, but this has obviously no bearing on the question, as the legend clearly states that he was associated with the place only as an ascetic after abdicating the throne. It must, however, be borne in mind that the theory of Chandragupta's rule in the south is not an established fact and we cannot altogether disregard the possibility that the southern districts were annexed to the empire, partly or wholly, by Bindusara who was also probably a warlike ruler as his cognomen '*Amitraghata*' or '*Amitrakhada*' would suggest. The evidence pertaining to the reign of Asoka suggests that Kashmir and Nepal were parts of the Maurya dominions, but it is again uncertain if their conquest was accomplished by Chandragupta or Bindusara or partly by both of them.

The vague memory of a movement of Mauryan troops in the south is preserved in the lyrics of some early Tamil poets who are generally supposed to have flourished not later than the early centuries of the Christian era[5]. It is said that the Moriyar (Mauryas) came to the south with an army of horses and elephants, with the Vadugar as their advance guard, in order to help the Kosar against the rebellious chief of Mohur. The detailed history of these events cannot be reconstructed at pre-

sent. The references in the lyrics have been made the basis of a theory envisaging a great Maurya invasion of the south in the course of which the invaders pushed as far south as Podiyil Hill in the Tinnevelly District, but Prof. K. A. Nilakant Sastri rightly points out that the poems really lend no support to this view. The name of the Maurya king is not given. The epithet *Vamba* (new or upstart) applied to the Moriyar in one of the passages has been taken to show that the events alluded to occurred in the time of Chandragupta himself rather than any of his successors and it is contended that we have here further evidence of that monarch's rule in the south as the expression 'Vadugar' is generally used in the Sangam literature to denote the Telugu-speaking people of the Deccan as far as the borders of the Tamil country. This is probable but not certain[5].

Whatever we may think about Chandragupta's connection with the South it cannot be denied that he was the 'chief architect of the greatest of India's ancient empires'. According to the generally accepted chronology, he survived the encounter with Seleucus only by a few years. The *Rajavalikathe* and certain other Jaina works speak of king Chandragupta of Pataliputra or Ujjayini who was a Jaina (or became one towards the close of his reign when a great famine occurred) and, abdicating the throne in favour of his son, accompanied the patriarch Bhadrabahu to the south where he eventually starved himself to death at Sravana Belagola in Mysore after the fashion of Jaina saints. The story is corroborated by epigraphic and monumental evidence discovered in Mysore. Though doubts have been raised about its historical value and its bearing on the personal history of the founder of the Mauryan empire, the consensus of scholarly opinion regards it as containing a substratum of truth and recognises its relation to the great Maurya.

In 326-5 B C., when Alexander was in the country, Chandragupta was king neither in Magadha nor in the Punjab. On the other hand, in 301 B. C., Seleucus was already back from his Indian campaign to fight in the battle of Ipsus after having met him as the 'king of the Indians'. For more precise information regarding the date of his accession, we have to turn to the Indian

sources. According to the Mahavamsa and other early Buddhist works, Asoka seized power in 214 A. B. and was coronated formally four years later in 218 A. B. Before him, his father and grandfather, Bindusara and Chandragupta, had ruled for 28 and 24 years respectively. The value of these indications is lessened considerably by the uncertanity of the date of the Buddha's death, but if we assume, as seems reasonable, that the Master entered Parinirvana in 483 B. C., the coronation of Asoka would be seen to have taken place in 265 B. C. and that of Chandragupta in 321 B. C. The date 265 for the abhisheka of Asoka receives confirmation from the internal testimony of the edicts themselves. It is well known that in RE XIII the emperor mentions five Greek rulers who were his contemporaries and in whose realms his missionaries acquired some success in the propagation of Dhamma. These are Antiochus II Theos of Syria (261-246 B. C), Ptolemey II of Egypt (285-247), Magas of Cyrene (c. 300-250), Antigonus Gonatas of Macedon (276-289) and Alexander of Corinth (252-c-244). The date of the inscription, probably thirteenth year after the coronation, would thus fall between 252 and 250 B. C., and of the coronation itself, between 265 and 263 B. C., a conclusion in full conformity with the evidence of the Buddhist works and indirectly supporting the Buddhist tradition regarding the period of Chandragupta's accession. These calculations are not undisputed. It is, for example, held that the interval of four years between the accession and coronation of Asoka is not an established fact, the veracity of the figure 218 itself has been doubted, arguments have been advanced to show that Alikasudara of the edicts is more likely to have been Alexander of Epirus (272-c.255 B. C.) and the view of Senart that the thirteenth Rock edict was engraved thirteen years after the coronation is not accepted by some. The controversy is such that the estimates of the date of Chandragupta's accession vary within a decade from 325 to 313 B. C. But the objections urged against the Buddhist chronology are not unanswerable, and we may adopt it as a working hypothesis that the first Maurya reigned from 321 to 297 B. C. This is also in accordance with the statement of Plutarch that he was called to royalty 'not long after' the invasion of Alexander.

But attention must be drawn to the fact that in the Buddhist sources the above date is representated as that of the downfall of the Nandas and the conquest of Magadha, and if Chandragupta really began his career from the north-west by expelling the Macedonians, it will be somewhat difficult to accept it. It has been shown above that in 321 B. C. Chandragupta could have been at best the master of the lower Indus Valley only. Porus and Ambhi were still ruling in the Punjab. The Thracian Eudamus was probably even now in a position of authority there and remained so upto c. 317 B. C. and effective Macedonian control of the borderland beyond the Indus still continued. It does not seem very likely that Chandragupta would advance against the Nanda Empire across the Jamuna without first finally settling the affairs of these powers in his immediate neighbourhood in the north-west and stabilising his position there. These difficulties may be explained away in one way or another, but probably the most acceptable assumption would be that the Buddhist writers confused the date of Chandragupta's accession in the north-west with the beginning of his sovereignty in Magadha and made the necessary adjustment when systematising their chronicles. The Jaina date, 313 B. C., for the overthrow of Nanda seems to accord better with the opinon that Chandragupta's first success was against the ·Macedonians, although its correctness cannot be vouched for, and some scholars have taken it to refer to the conquest of Ujjayini (Avanti) by the Maurya king[6].

B. CHANDRAGUPTA'S GOVERNMENT

Not the least difficult of the problems Chandragupta was called upon to face was that of providing a suitable administrative framework for his great empire. The Nanda kings and their predecessors had no doubt prepared the ground to some extent, but the unprecedented dimensions of the Maurya Empire and its particular problems called for a good deal of original planning and bold experimentation. The examples of the Achaemenian and Alexandrian Empires as also of the big Hellenistic

monarchies which flourished on the ruins of the latter (e.g. the Seleucid and the Egyptian monarchies) were too outlandish to serve as absolute models. The first Maurya, therefore, set about the task of evolving a form of polity suitable to the conditions of his age. His great Chancellor, Kautilya, made a thorough study of the existing treatises on the subject and the actual practices prevailing in the states, probably including some foreign ones. The result was a highly efficient system which became a model for succeeding regimes to copy. The Arthasastra of Kautilya and the *Indica* of Megasthenes are our main sources of information about the government of Chandragupta. Welcome light is shed on some obscure points by the edicts of Asoka and a couple of interesting details are furnished by the Junagarh Rock Inscription of Rudradaman engraved in 150 A. D.

The king, who still bore the traditional title of *raja* notwithstanding his undoubtedly Imperial status, was the pivot of the system and the fountain-head of all administration, appointing, promoting and degrading the highest officers of the state. Like that of the Achaemenian emperors of Persia, his decree had the force of law and was considered superior even to equity, contract or usage. He was the supreme commander in war and the final court of justice in the realm. In such a system much depended on his personal initiative, resourcefulness and power of application—qualities which Chandragupta possessed in an abundant measure. Megasthenes represents him as a conscientious sovereign granting interviews to people even when his body was being massaged with ebony rulers and Kautilya prescribes a 'minute schedule of busy life for the king with particular injunction not to make his petitioners wait at his door but to hear all urgent calls at once.'

In the task of administration, the king was assisted by a number of ministers *(mantrin)* who were the highest officials of the state and received a salary of 48000 *panas* per annum. They formed a sort of inner cabinet of the realm and were generally men who had given proof of their integrity and ability.[22] Each one of them probably held charge of one or more departments about which he advised the king. It would appear *prima facie* that one of them was appointed the Chief Minister but it is somewhat surprising that this high dignitary is not mentioned in the Arthasastra.

Besides the *mantrins*, there was also a *Mantri-Parishad* or Council

of Ministers, a high-placed body whose exact constitution and functions are somewhat obscure. It would appear from the Arthasastra that it was summoned when some emergent work was to be transacted and decided the issue in hand by the vote of majority after due deliberation. There were probably no hard and fast rules about its numerical strength but under Chandragupta it must have been a fairly large body as favoured by Kautilya. The members of the *Parishad* received 12000 *panas* per year by way of salary. The *Parishad* is referred to in the 3rd and 6th Rock Edicts of Asoka. Its position in the administration *vis a vis* the *mantrins* cannot be determined. The *mantrins* attended its meetings but all its members obviously did not enjoy the cabinet rank.

The main brunt of the administration was borne by an efficient bureaucracy which seems to have functioned in the different centres of the empire. The vast extent of the empire necessitated the employment of a formidable army of officials for the effective control of the various branches of administration. The generic name for officers of the highest cadre appears to have been *tirtha* and of these as many as eighteen, including the *mantrin*, the *heir-apparent* and the *commander-in-chief*, are mentioned in the Arthasastra.[23] The different departments of the government functioned under the immediate charge of *adhyakshas* (superintendents) of whom also the Arthasastra provides a long list. The duties of the *adhyakshas* are described at length by Kautilya. The bureaucracy of the empire attracted the attention of Megasthenes also who gives the following succint account of it:

'Of the Magistrates, some have the charge of the market, others of the city, others of the soldiery. Some have the care of the rivers, measure the land as in Egypt, and inspect the closed reservoirs from which water is distributed by canals so that all may have an equal use of it. These persons have charge also of the hunters and have the power of rewarding or punishing those who merit either. They collect the taxes, and superintend the occupations connected with land, as wood-cutters, carpenters, workers in brass and miners. They superintend the public roads and place a pillar at every ten stadia to indicate the by-ways and distances. Those who have charge of the city *(astynomoi)* are divided into six bodies of five each'.

One of the most important departments of the central government was the army whose numerical strength has been estimated at

600000 infantry, 50000 horse, 9000 elephants and perhaps 800 chariots. This formidable fighting machine was not a militia or an irregular force, but a standing army, a permanent limb of the state 'whose discipline, organisation and administration reflect the highest degree of efficiency achieved in the ancient Orient'. Megasthenes deposes that its control was vested in a War Office consisting of thirty members divided into six boards of five each. Each board was responsible for one of the following sections: admiralty, transport, infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariots. Kautilya refers to *adhyakshas* of *patti* (infantry), *asva* (horse), *hasti* (elephants) and *ratha* (chariots) and it is important to note that he also makes clear mention of boards for the four divisions. 'These boards, rather than the individual officers presiding over them, seem to have caught the attention of Megasthenes.' The commander-in-chief *(senapati)* was, of course, the head of the War Office and responsible for the welfare and efficiency of the troops who were distributed in forts, garrisons and military stations throughout the realm with adequate arrangements for training and exercise. The frontiers of the empire were defended by strong fortresses, built on special plans, under the charge of officers known as *Antapala*. While particular care was taken to develop the chariot and elephant corps, the infantry was recruited from *maula* (hereditary soldiers), *bhrita* (merceneries), *sreni* (troops provided by corporations) and *atavi* (forest tribes). The admiralty *(Navaadhysha* of Kautilya) controlled not only the fighting ships of the empire—of the number and strength of these we have no idea—but also the merchants men and small private crafts and was entrusted with the task of suppressing the pirate boats *(himrika)* in the territorial waters. It would be interesting to compare the naval strength of the Mauryas with that of the contemporary Seleucids and Ptolemids, but statistics are lacking.

For the administration of justice there were regular law courts in all the important centres of population though petty cases in the countryside were probably decided by the headmen themselves, with the assistance of the village elders. The courts were of two types, viz., (a) *Dharmasthiya* which was presided over by three *Dharmstahas* and three *amatyas* and (b) *Knatakasadhana* consisting of three *Pardestris* and three *amatyas*.[24] There were probably special judges to listen to the cases of foreigners. At the apex of the judicial system stood the King himself.

The penal law of Chandragupta was a severe one, as is testified to by all authorities. While minor offences were punished with fines, deterrent penalties were awarded for the more serious crimes. Megasthenes notes that a person who injured an artisan was put to death and the same punishment was reserved for those also who evaded taxes on sales or embezzled government accounts. A more frequent sentence was that of mutilation with which many degrees of crime were visited. Whipping, torture and externment were common. In special cases burning was also resorted to and Brahmana traitors suffered death by drowning.

An important feature of the administration was the extensive net work of spies and secret agents spread throughout the realm for keeping watch over government officials and the people and ensuring general security. The Arthasastra mentions two classes of spies called *Sanstha* (the stationary ones) and *Sancharin* (the moving ones) and the Greek writers speak of the *episkopoi* (overseers) whose duty it was to gather information from all places and convey it to the appropriate authority. According to Strabo, the Inspectors, who were appointed only from among the best and most trustworthy persons, were 'entrusted with the superintendence of all that is going on and it is their duty to report privately to the king.' Not infrequently women were also employed as secret agents. The details given by Kautilya and the Greek observers clearly show that the spy organisation was considered to be of pivotal importance in the scheme of administration and no effort was spared to maintain it at the highest pitch of efficiency.

The main source of the state's revenue was the land-tax (*bhaga*) which was 'fixed theoretically at $\frac{1}{6}$ of the produce but was in practice generally a higher proportion varying with local economic conditions'. Among the other sources of income were taxes on sales and manufacture, water-rates, tolls, octrois, ferrydues, customs, forests, mines, salt, royal estates, license fees paid by traders, craftsmen, artisans, courtesans etc., and many others. The *Samaharta*, or the Collector General, was responsible for the collection of revenues and keeping proper accounts thereof. The principal heads of expenditure included the maintenance of the king and his family and court, salaries of officials, upkeep of government offices and army establishments, development and exploitation of state property

including forests and mines, and the promotion of works of public utility. Though kept in a condition of the highest military efficiency, the Mauryan empire displayed many features of a welfare state and paid due attention to the various measures considered necessary for the advancement of the peoples' prosperity and culture. A large part of the total income was spent in such benevolent activities as constructions of roads, development of irrigation facilities, grants to religious and educational institutions, extension and improvement of medical and health services, maintenance of the old and helpless and so on. A welcome sidelight on this aspect of the government of Chandragupta is thrown by the Junagarh Inscription of Rudradaman which says, as we have seen, that the embankment of the Sudarsana Lake, a gigantic project of the time fulfilling the irrigational needs of a large area in Kathiawar, was built by an officer of the great Maurya. Megasthenes also bears eloquent testimony to the care bestowed on the proper arrangements for the distribution of canal water among the agriculturists and the upkeep of the means of transport and communication. A substantial sum must have been devoted annually to the proper repairs of the great highway, measuring about 1000 stadia (1300 miles) between the termini, which connected the north-west with the mouth of the Ganges and thus anticipated the Grand Trunk Road of the later days. The state attached special importance to the artisans who received maintenance from it and hunters and herdsmen were also rewarded for freeing the country from wild beasts and birds.

Curiously enough, the Arthasastra gives us very little information about the provincial government of Chandragupta. But it is certain that the general set-up was the same as the one reflected in the edicts of his grandson, Asoka. While the home territory (*Prachya-Prasii*) was administered directly by the emperor with the assistance of crown officials, the outlying provinces such as Uttarapatha (headquarters at Taxila), Avantipatha (Ujjaini) and Dakshinapatha (Suvarnagiri) were entrusted to the charge of governors or viceroys who were princes of the royal blood (*kumara*) wherever possible. The powers and functions of the provincial governors covered a large range and they probably had their own courts, judiciary and police force. The army, however, was outside their jurisdiction and obeyed only the Imperial writ. Within the limits of the empire there also existed a number of semi-autonomous

clans or tribes some of which had a 'democratic form of government'. We have no definite knowledge of how their relations with the provincial governors were adjusted. Of such self-governing units mention is made of Lichchhavika, Vrijjika, Mallaka, Kuru, Panchala, Gandhara, Kamboja, Bhoja, Andha, Pulinda and some others. It is important to note that in spite of the great centralising tendency of the times and the hostile attitude of Kautilya many of these autonomous communities succeeded in retaining their traditional liberty and emerged as independent states on the downfall of the Magadhan empire. Though better integrated than most of its successors, the Maurya empire may still be said to have conformed to the traditional Indian pattern which is described as 'feudal-federal' by a high authority.

The provinces were probably further divided into *aharas* or *vishayas* (districts). The head of the district administration, called *Sthanika*, had a number of *Gopas* under him, each in charge of five to ten villages. The *Sthanikas* were subordinate to the *Samaharta* and were controlled by him with the help of touring officers known as as *Pradeshtri* (generally identified with *Pradesika* mentioned in Asoka's edicts).

The smallest unit of administration was the village (*grama*) which enjoyed a considerable measure of self-government. The executive authority in the villages was vested in the *Gramaka* or *Gramani* (headman), probably an elected official, who was assisted in the discharge of his function by the village-elders (*grama-vriddha*) and controlled all the subjects of local interest such as adjustment of land and water rights, preservation and augmentation of property belonging to temples, trusts and minors, and maintenance of wells, tanks, pastures, woods and roads. The headman and the elders had also the power to decide the minor legal cases and disputes and inflict light penalties, usually fines. The district officials, though exercising a supervisory control over the affairs of the village, seldom interfered directly in them. Communal labour, enforceable by law, occupied an important place in the routine of the villagers, though absence from it could sometimes be atoned for by suitable monetary compensation.

A good account of the municipal administration of the Mauryas is furnished by Megasthenes. The ambassador describes the set-up as follows :—

'Those who have charge of the city (*Astynomoi*) are divided into six board of five each. The members of the first look after everything relating to the industrial arts. Those of the second attend to the entertainment of foreigners. To these they assign lodgings, and they keep watch over their modes of life by means of those persons whom they give to them for assistants. They escort them in the way when they leave the country, or in the event of their dying, forward their property to their relatives. They take care of them when they are sick and, if they die, bury them. The third body consists of those who inquire when and how births and deaths occur with the view not only of levying a tax, but also in order that births and deaths among both high and low may not escape the cognizance of the government. The fourth body superintends trade and commerce. Its members have charge of weights and measures and see that the products in their season are sold by public notice. No one is allowed to deal in more than one kind of commodity unless he pays a double tax. The fifth class supervises manufactured articles which they sell by public notice. What is new is sold separately from what is old and there is a fine for mixing the two together. The sixth and the last class consists of those who collect the tenths of the prices of the articles sold. Fraud in the payment of taxes is punished with death.........Such are the functions which these bodies separately discharge. In their collective capacity they have charge both of their special departments, and also of matters affecting the general interest, as the keeping of public buildings in proper repair, the regulation of prices, the care of markets, harbours and temples.'

It is difficult to say if this elaborate arrangement prevailed only in the major towns like Pataliputra or it was a general feature of town administration everywhere, but the former appears more probable. Kautilya calls the officer in charge of the cities *Nagaraka*. His duties as enumerated in the Arthasastra are generally similar to the functions of the boards of Megasthenes. It seems that he regulated the administration of the town with the help of a number of assistants divided into committees or departments for specific purposes.

In devising the structure of administration briefly described

above, Kautilya made it plain that the happiness of the people is the supreme goal of political organisation and to that extent gave to the Mauryan Empire the character of a welfare state. The numerous details furnished by the Arthasastra and the Greek writers leave no doubt that the organism of the Mauryan government functioned consciously for promoting the common good. And it functioned with a degree of efficiency unknown in India at any other time. It has been pointed out with perfect justification that even Akbar, 'the greatest of the Mughals had nothing like it and it may be doubted if any of the ancient Greek cities were better organised.' But the system had its weakness also for which even the peculiar circumstances of the time—the exigencies of a newly founded imperial unity—cannot provide a sufficient excuse. Within its framework there was little scope for the liberty of the individual and the common man lived under conditions of great restraint. The tentacles of the state reached every nook and corner of society. Swarms of spies and secret agents pried into, and reported on, public and private life alike; there could be, and perhaps was, much room for bureaucratic oppression. It was perhaps this feature that led a foreign writer to accuse Chandragupta of 'turning the name of liberty into slavery' and repressing the people, and some modern authorities to describe his regime as a 'police state.'[2] The laws of the relam were unduly harsh and by their very rigour must have overshot the mark. It was well that a few years later Asoka spotted the defect and tried to place the legal system on a more humane basis. The government of Chandragupta suffered from too much control; it was an efficient government but frankly autocratic and ruthless.

C. CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA : AN ESTIMATE

An observer viewing the Indian political scene about the beginning of the 3rd century B.C. would be struck with the remarkable change that had come over it since the departure of Alexander about a quarter century ago. The powerful Nanda dynasty no longer ruled in Pataliputra. All traces of foreign dominance had vanished from North-Western India and the adjoining borderland and, for the first time in history, the valleys

of the Indus and the Ganges were bound together by the ties of one political authority. Though we cannot be certain on the point, that authority probably extended over Southern India as far as Northern Mysore and represented, in a visible form, the first realisation of the old dream of a United Bharatavarsha. It was Chandragupta who had brought about the change. If the Greek accounts are to be believed, he started his active political career while still hardly more than a youth and he probably ceased to reign at the comparatively early age of less than fifty years. It was a proud record of achievement for anyone, and specially so for one who had perhaps not been born to royalty.

He was undoubtedly a great soldier to have accomplished all this. No fighter of ordinary calibre could have successfully overcome the formidable war-machine of Nanda, with its large and numerous elephants, and withstood one of the greatest Hellenistic generals of the time. Against the dark background of India's chronic inability to hold her own against the onslaught of an organised foreign power, the defeat or 'near-defeat' of Seleucu on the Indus at his hands constitutes a bright spot falsifying the prevalent notion of the intrinsic inferiority of the Indian military system to that of the West. Whether he first fought against the Nandas or the Macedonians he was apparently gifted with an unusual organising talent and high qualities of leadership. 'His marriage with a foreign princess was a daring innovation in Hindu society, clearly reflecting an open and liberal mind'. If the Jaina legends about his death have any truth in them, he must have been a deeply religious person to cut himself off from the power and pelf of the imperial throne in order to lead a life of austerity and privation.

His success placed India on the political map of the world. The ambitious successors of Alexander now eagerly stretched the hand of friendship towards her. 'For three generations at least, the Greeks did not renew the aggression of Alexander and Seleucus on secluded India and were content to maintain friendly diplomatic and commercial relations with her'. It was only after the vigour infused into the Magadhan Empire by Chandragupta

had exhausted itself that India lost stature and her prestige sank down to a low ebb.

That he was a conscientious sovereign is certain; Megasthenes' verdict suffices. He was probably more than that—a constructive administrator of no small merit. The administrative system of the Maurya Empire, which may be said to be at the base of the entire subsequent administrative development of India, may owe something to his predecessors but one gets the strong impression that much of it was due to his own creative ability and to that of his famous Chancellor. It had its obvious shortcomings, but it was highly efficient and vigorous. If it did not leave much scope for the exercise of civic freedom and rights, one must remember that conditions elsewhere were no better and that the despotic authority of his government was used largely for promoting the welfare of the people, as is clear from the testimony of both Megasthenes and Kautilya. As the architect of the Maurya Empire and, to a large extent, of the Maurya administration, he has left a deep impress on Indian history. "The Hindu kings to the last followed the organisation of the Maurya empire in its three essential aspects, the revenue system, the bureaucracy and the police. The organisation as it existed was taken over by the Muslim rulers and from them by the British. If Indian administration of today is analysed to its basis the doctrines and practices of Chanakya will be found to be still in force."

D. BINDUSARA

The successor of Chandragupta, his son Bindusara, seems to have been known as *Amitraghata* or *Amitrakhada*[1]. It is believed by some that he was born of the Greek wife of his father but there is nothing to justify this supposition.

Very little of a definite nature is known about the political happenings of the reign of Bindusara. We learn from the *Diyavadana* that he had to face an uprising of the citizens of Taxila inspired by the misdeeds of the government officials, which was pacified by Asoka. The prince is afterwards said to have entered the *Svasa* country which cannot be satisfactorily identified. Taranath deposes that the Khasyas and Nepalas rose in revolt

against the king and were likewise put down by Asoka. It would appear that taking advantage of the removal of the strong arm of Chandragupta by abdication or death, some of the outlying regions tried to break away from the empire but were brought back to submission. Taranath tells us that Chanakya, 'one of the great lords' of Bindusara, "accomplished the destruction of the nobles and kings of sixteen states and made him the master of all the territory between the eastern and western seas." The association of Chanakya or Kautilya with Bindusara for some time is referred to in the Aryamanjusrimulakalpa and the Parisishtaparvan also. The statement of the Tibetan chronicler has been taken by some to mean that it was Bindusara who annexed Southern India, 'the territory between the eastern and western seas,' to the Maurya Empire. Though not improbable in itself, this must be regarded as doubtful in view of what has been said above about the career and conquests of Chandragupta. The testimony of Taranath about the warlike activities of Bindusara and Chanakya 'need mean nothing more than the suppression of widespread revolts' in the Maurya Empire and the title *Amitraghata* or *Amitrakhada* may also be understood in this light.

Bindusara maintained the friendly relations his father had established with the Seleucid ruling family of Western Asia. The classical writers speak of a certain Deimachus sent by Antiochus Soter, the successor of Seleucus, to his court. Athenaeus tells us at ththe Maurya king asked his Hellenic friend to buy and send him sweet wine, dried figs and a philosopher. Antiochus forwarded the first two aricles but expressed his inability to procure the philosopher as the law forbade the sale of sophists in Greece. Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt (c. 285-247 B. C.) sent an envoy named Dionysus to India. But it is not known if the ambassador was accredited to the court of Bindusara or his son Asoka.

Bindusara reigned for 27 or 28 years. According to the chronology accepted in these pages he died in c. 269 B. C.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. According to traditions recorded in the Mahavamsatika and the Mahabodhivamsa (c. 10th century A. D.), Chandragupta's father, the chief of Moriyanagara, was killed in fight against a powerful ruler, leaving his family destitute. His widow accompanied by her brothers, took refuge in Pushpapura (Pataliputra) and there gave birth to Chandragupta The maternal uncles left the new- qornc hild at the threshold of a cowherd who brought him up as his own son but later sold him to a hunter. In the hunter's village, he was entrusted wit the task of tending cattle. But the boy possessed remarkable qualities and became the leader of the village lads with whom he often played the 'king's game' (Raja Film and organised a mock-court at which he himself, as king, administered justice. It was at such a session that he was spotted by Chanakya. The far-sighted Brahmana bought him for 1000 karshapanas and took him to his home-town of Taxila, the famous centre of education in the north-west, where he received education for 7 or 8 years.

According to the Jaina works, Chanakya satisfied the pregnancy-longing of the daughter of the chief of a village o Nanda's peacock-tamers by a trick on the condition that, if she gave birth to a 'e child, he should be made over to him. She begot a male child, called Chandragupta, who, on growing up, often played the 'king's game' with the other children of the village. Chanakya, returning to the village from some unknown place, saw him at play, and learning that he was the same child whose mother had been helped him, made away forthwith with the boy from the place.

It is difficult to extract the grain of truth, if there be any, from the husk of legend in these stories. It, however, appears to be a fact that the early life of Chandragupta was spent in humble circumstances. Apparently, Justin also confirms this when he tells us that the Maurya was 'born in humble life' and the 'classical notices of his encouter with a lion and an elephant accord well with his residence amidst the wild denizens', referred to in the Indian sources. The Buddhist story regarding his education at Taxila also agrees with the statement of Plutarch and Justin that he saw Alexander while still a youth.

2. "..... India, which after Alexander's death, as if the yoke of servitude had been shaken off its neck, had put his prefects to death. Sandrocottus had been the leader who achieved this freedom. He was born in humble life but was prompted to aspire to royalty by an omen significant of august destiny. For, when by his boldness of speech he offended Alexander and was ordered by him to be put to death, he sought safety by speedy flight. When he lay down overcome with fatigue and had fallen in a deep sleep, a lion of enormous size approaching the slumberer licked with its tongue the sweat which oozed profusely from his body and when he woke quietly took its departure. It was this prodigy which first inspired him with the hope f winning the throne and so collected a band of robbers (or mercenaries) he instigated the Indians to overthrow the existing government

When he was thereafter preparing to fight Alexander's prefects, a wild elephant of monstrous size approached him, and kneeling submissively like a tame elephant, received him on its back and fought vigorously in front of the army. Sandrocottus having thus won the throne was reigning over India when Seleucus was laying the foundations of his future greatness."

Some writers have proposed to read Nandrum (Nanda) for Alexandrum (Alexander) in the above passage, but there is little justification for the emendation. The obvious implication of Justin's account is that Chandragupta emerged into the lime light in the north-west as the successful leader of a revolutionary movement against the Macedonians and the acquisition of sovereignty by him was the result of the overthrow of Alexandrian prefects. The 'existing government' is no doubt the Macedonian Government of the Indus Valley. Some take it to refer to the Nanda Government of Magadha, but it seems unlikely that the Graceo-Roman historians who were well acquainted with the might of the Nandas would allude to their fall in such a cursory fashion. The original words of Justin which Hultzsch renders as 'instigated the Indians to overthrow the existing Government" are interpreted by some to mean 'solicited the Indians to support his new sovereignty.' If this interpretation is correct, it may signify that the young Maurya proclaimed himself king and began to organise a volt against the foreigners. The preparations for war must have takes some time, and hence the statement that he went to fight the prefect 'some time after.' The curious story of the appearance of the wild elephant itself suggests that the Maurya was sill a commoner though with a promise of future royalty. The argument that in the Mudrarakshasa Chandragupta is referred to as simply a raja even after he had seized the throne of Magadha and so could not have been master of the north-west at the time has little force in in it. Asoka's dominion undoubtedly extended from Afghanistan to North Mysore, and yet he was satisfied with the title raja. The age of grandiloquent epithets like Maharaja, Maharajadhiraja Samrat and Paramabhattaraka had not yet begun. The silence of the Indian works about the war against the Macedonians cannot be taken to indicate that the overthrow of the Nandas preceded it; these works were written from the view-point of Inner India and the Indian imperial history. The account of the terrible war between the forces of Nanda and Chandragupta in the Milindapanho, an early work, also suggests that the Maurya was already ruling over a considerable kingdom whose resources he utilised in the fray.

According to the Mahavamsatika and the Parisishtaparvan, Chandragupta and Chankya first made an attack on the heart of the Nanda Empire but were utterly defeated and had to run away for their lives. Their mistake was exposed to them by the talk of a mother and her child they overheard in the obscure village where they had taken refuge. Learning wisdom from the mother's advice to the son, they began

their second onslaught on the Nanda Empire from the 'frontiers' and gained complete success. This is taken by some to suggest that Chandragupta first rebelled unsuccessfully against the Nandas in Magadha and being forced to flee the country proceeded to the north-west (the 'frontier') where he soon began to work against the Macedonians. But the story in question is evidently pure romance and it will be highly injudicious to base any conclusions on it.

3. It is thought (CHI, 1, p. 424) that the overthrow of the Nandas was the result of the joint effort of the two kings of the north-west, Porus and Chandragupta. But the doubtful nature of the identification of Parvataka with Porus has been clearly demonstrated by Dr. Raychaudhuri (Age of Nandas and Mauryas, p. 147). 'Parvataka and his family are clearly branded as Mlechchha in the play, and their forces as Mlechchha-bala; on the other hand, the Purus or Pauravas could claim an illustrious Vedic and epic ancestry. The territory over which Parvataka ruled is described by Jain writers as Himavatkuta while Porus ruled at first the country between the Jhelum and the Chenab to which were added the territories stretching as far as the Hyphasis or Beas and the Indus.' According to Jacobi, Parvataka was probably a king of Nepal. The Buddhist tradition (Mahavamsatika) speaks of Pabbata (Parvata) as a son of Nanda himself. As the name Parvataka is first met with in the Mudrarakshasa of which the plot is characterized by many imaginary details, the historicity of Parvataka cannot be regarded as beyond question.

3a. Seleucus set out for the east only after he regained Babylon in 312 B. C. As he had to subdue many places on the way through hard fighting he could hardly have advanced against India before c. 306 B. C. On the other hand, he was already back from the Indian campaign to prosecute the war with Antigonus in 301 B. C. It is thought that the march-back and the preparations for the war must have occupied at least about two years.

4. The arguments in support of this have been set forth by V. Smith in an appendix in his Early History of India. We read in the Natural History of Pliny (78 A. D.) that many writers did not regard the Indus as the western boundary of India but also included the four satrapies named above in it. As Pliny derived his information about India mainly from Megasthenes and other contemporaries of Chandragupta and Seleucus, his statement may be regarded as true of the Maurya period. Sir Aurel Stein discovered the remains of a Buddhist monastery in the 'terminal marshes of the Helmund' in Seistan. Can this have any bearing on the question ?

The view of some that Chandragupta suffered reverse at the hands of Seleucus and the latter penetrated far into India is interesting only as a piece of curious thought. The idea that the Syrian king married a daughter of Chandragupta is unwarranted. Some think that the Greek princess was married to Chandragupta's son, Bindusara,

5. These are Mamulnar, Paran Korranar and Kaillil Attiraiyanar. The last two had only vague notions about the Mauryas and even classed them with superhuman beings like Vidyadharas, but the information of Mamulnar was evidently based on a genuine historical tradition.

6. The date of the accession of Chandragupta Maurya must lie, as we have seen above, between 326-5 and 301 B. C. Any attempt at a more precise calculation involves difficulties, and the inadequacy of the evidence is such that various dates from 325 to 313 B. C. have been suggested for that momentous event by different writers. The general trend of opinion, however, seems to favour the Buddhist date, 321 B. C., which, as pointed out in the text, seems to be corroborated by the internal testimony of RE XIII also. The objections urged against this line of approach do not appear to be insuperable. Hultzsch is skeptical about the value of the figure 218 as it, 'includes a neat period of 100 years between the death of the Buddha and the convention of the second general council.' (C II, I, XXXIII). But, as argued by Geiger, it is precisely on this point that 'scepticism seems to be least called for.' The coronation of Asoka was an event of the highest importance for Buddhism and it seems improbable that the churchmen, writing in the early centuries of the Christian era, were ignorant of its correct date.. The trustworthiness of the four-year interregnum before the abhisheka has ee doubted by some on the ground that there is no reference to it in the Puranas any other source. Smith, however, has drawn attention to the fact that while according to the general statement of the Puranas the Maurya dynasty lasted for 137 years, the total of the individual reigns of the Maurya kings in the Vayu and Matsya Puranas is 133 years only. The discrepancy may well be due to the omission of the 4 years of Asoka's unconsecrated rule. The pointed way in which Asoka dates events in years reckoned from his coronation may itself suggest that the abhisheka was separated from the actual seizure of power by a considerable period of time. It is true that Asoka's grandson, Dasaratha, also followed the same practice in his inscriptions, but it is well known that the forms of official documents, once fixed, are generally adhered to subsequently. It has been argued by some that the death of Magas of Cyrene cannot be placed later than 258 B. C., but this point has been effectiveyly disposed of by Eggermont. Some historians equate Alikasudara of R E XIII with Alexander of Epirus who died in 255 B. C. on the ground that he was a more important ruler than the homonymons king of Corinth. It must, however, be noted that the rulers mentioned in the edict are those in whose dominions the religious propaganda of Asoka obtained some succeess.

For the Jaina date of the accession of Chandragupta, cf. JRAS, 1932, pp. 273 off.

7. According to Fleet, the Jaina tradition refers not to Bhadrabahu I Srutakevali but to Bhadrabahu II Upangi who became pontiff in 53 B. C. and that in the legend Chandragupta is probably a mistake for Guptigupta, the chief disciple of the latter (Ind. Ant. 1992, pp. 156 ff.). His view is based mainly on his interpretation of the long inscription at Sravana-Belagola. But it may be pointed out that in one of the inscriptions at the same place (dated 1129), mentioning Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta, the former is expressly called 'Srutakevali.' The date of the death of Bhadrabahu Srutakevali is given as 192 A. V. by the Digambaras and 179 A.

V. by the Svetambaras, both of which fall about the reign of Chandragupta. It would appear from the long inscription that, on being ordained, Chandragupta probably assumed the clerical name of Prabhachandra. The Jaina literary tradition is preserved in such texts as the Rajavalikathe, Bhadrabahucharita of Ratnanandin (c. 1450) and the Brihatkathakosha of Harishena (931 A. D). The oldest epigraph referring to the pair (yugma) Bhadrabahu and 'Chandragupta munipati' is of about 600 A. D. The association of Chandragupta and Bhadrabahu with Sravana Belagola is attested by monumental evidence also. It is said that the smaller hill at the place and an ancient temple on it are known as Chandragiri and Chandraguptabasti respectively while a cave in the same hill bears the name Bhadrabahuguha.

8. Amitrochates (Athenaeus), Allitrochades (Strabo).

CHAPTER II

Asoka the Great

A. ACCESSION AND EARLY LIFE

Buddhist tradition is unanimous in affirming that the death of Bindusara was followed by a contest for succession. Asoka, the ex-emperor's second eldest son, defied alike the right of primogeniture and the wish of the departed monarch, and usurped the throne by defeating and killing his elder step-brother, Sumana or Susima. While the northern sources represent the struggle as a duel between the two rival claimants, the Buddhist records of Ceylon state that Asoka made short work of all his non-uterine brothers, ninety-nine in numer, to possess the empire. The Divyavadana informs us that his claim was supported by a ministerial party at the imperial court.

Though there is no independent corroboration of this story of a fratricidal war, the agreement between the northern and southern traditions on the point and the possibility of the Ceylonese statement that the formal coronation of Asoka took place four years after his accession being true (supra, p. 219) make it somewhat difficult to dismiss it as altogether fictitious. The postponement of the coronation is explained by some as possibly due to Asoka having not yet reached the age of 25 which was a condition precedent for obtaining royal *abhisheka* in those days. The unsoundness of this view has been demonstrated by Dr. Raychaudhuri (PHAI,[6] p. 302) and it may be that the real explanation is to be found in the uncertainties of a disputed succession and the confusion caused by it. The story about the wholesale destruction of the brothers, however, appears to be grossly exaggerated, probably invented by 'mendacious monks' to bring

out in greater contrast the virtue of Asoka after his conversion to Buddhism. In RE V, we find the emperor making solicitous allusion to the families of his brothers in a manner suggesting that *several* of these were living when the epigraph was engraved many years after the civil war was over.

The prince who thus *probably* forced his way to power in a none too scrupulous fashion was destined to be one of the most remarkable figures of all history. But for the first eight years of his reign (counted from the coronation), he led the life of a 'norf mal Hindu raja of the times' without anything to distinguish him from his less famous contemporaries. He went frequently on *vihara-yatras*, pleasure excursions, wherein he indulged in manifold diversions including *mrigaya* or chase. Following the time-honoured royal practice of India, he effected annual jail deliveries on the an niversary of his birthday or coronation and perhaps kept his people in good humour by feasting and amusing them. 'One mode of public entertainment practised by him was the celebration of *samajas*, festive gatherings, both of the edifying and convivial types', the latter of which was accompanied by much eating of meat. He also seems to have doled out meat soup every day to the needy and the poor in order to make himself popular and 'hundreds of thousand' animals were slaughtered daily in the royal kitchen for this purpose. There was thus nothing in his conduct during these eight years to foretell the great change brought about so suddenly by the Kalinga War and his subsequent conversion to Buddhism. As yet, he was only an Indian prince of about 2200 years ago, unencumbered by any unusual ideas about *ahimsa*, morality or universal welfare. We need not, however credit the northern Buddhist tradition that he was, during this period, a monster of cruelty, a blood-thirsty person, decapitating people on the slightest pretext and devising fresh ways and means of satisfying his lust for blood—diabolical practices that earned for him the opprobrious epithet of Chandasoka. The tradition is evidently on a par with the southern stories about the massacre of all the brothers and is a product of the same mentality[4].

Following his predecessors, Asoka called himself Devanampriya, 'dear of gods.' The full royal formula employed by him to designate himself in his edicts is *Devanampiye Piyadasi Laja* (Devanampriyah Priyadarsi Raja) which may be rendered as 'Priyadarsi, the king, dear unto gods' or as 'His Sacred and Gracious Majesty'. The name Asoka itself occurs only in one version of the MRE I found at Maski in Hyderabad and, it is reported, in a recently discovered copy of the edicts in Madhya Pradesh. Its rare occurrence in the edicts has led some to wonder if it is not merely a style of the king and Priyadarsi, the real appellation. But since some Satavahana rulers of the Deccan and certain kings of Central Asia were also called Priyadarsana and the Kshatrapas of Western India used a modified form of the same, Bhadramukha, this does not seem probble and, in any case, the name Asoka has now come to stay. Certain old texts ascribe the opprobrious sense of *murkha* (imbecile) to the expression *Devanampriya*, but that it was also used as an honorific title is clear from such works as the *Harshacharita* of Banabhatta.

B. THE WAR IN KALINGA AND THE CHANGE OF POLICY

In respect of the neighbouring states in India, the new emperor followed the traditional aggressive policy of the Mauryas. Eight years after the coronation he invaded the state of Kalinga the Bay of Bengal and conquered it. Kalinga had become as we saw, a part of the Magadhan Empire under the Nandas. Why was it then necessary for Asoka to reconquer it? The kingdom had apparently broken away and asserted its freedom in the interval between the Nandas and him. We do not know whether this was in the reign of Bindusara, represented by Buddhist tradition as a period of wide-spread revolts, or at the time of the dynastic revolution that ushered the Mauryas into imperial history, but the latter appears a more probable alternative. Referring to the Kalingae, Pliny, whose source of information is generally supposed

to have been Megasthenes, says that their king had a formidable force of 60000 foot, 10000 horse and 700 elephants to keep watch and ward over him in 'procint of war'. This sounds like the description of an independent power in the time of Chandragupta Maurya. Whatever the truth may have been, when Asoka advanced against them, the Kalingas had developed their military strength considerably, and the emperor did not find their conquest an easy matter. The war was a sanguinary one, involving much bloodshed and untold miseries to the people in general. "One hundred and fifty thousand people were carried off captive from there, a hundred thousand slain and many times that number died." Even the non-combatants including Brahmanas, ascetics and house-holders, suffered greatly, being forcibly separated from their beloved ones and subjected to violence. The high figures given above are quoted from RE XIII and *may* suggest that the invading forces had to face something like a popular resistance in Kalinga. But local patriotism ultimately yielded to the organised might of Magadha. The freedom of of the Kalingas was destroyed and their kingdom was converted into a province of the Maurya Empire administered by royal officers deputed by the imperial Government at Pataliputra. Two subordinate administrative centres appear to have been established to govern it—a northern one at Tosali (Dhauli) in the Puri District of Orissa and a southern one at Jaugada in Ganjam, under a viceroy of the royal blood.

The obvious purpose of Asoka in undertaking the conquest was to round off his empire though it is not improbable that he had also an eye on the ports of Kalinga which, in later times, are known to have controlled a good part of India's maritime trade with the east. 'Quite incidentally, however, the war became the turning point in his life', in the history of Magadha and in that of India. The emperor, who *probably* led the campaign in person, was deeply stirred by the horrors of the war and the miseries and bloodshed it entailed. The dormant strain of piety in his nature was roused and poignant remorse smote his heart. 'Thus arose in his Sacred Majesty remorse for having conquered the

Kalingas because the conquest of a country, previously unconquered, implies the slaughter, death and carrying away captive of the people. That is a matter of profound sorrow and regret to His Sacred Majesty......To-day if a hundredth or a thousandth part of those who suffered in Kalinga were to be killed, to die or to be taken captive, it would be very grievous to the Beloved of gods'. These fervent words of the 13th Rock Edict, probably drafted by the emperor himself, give us an idea of the great impression that the war made on him. The intensity of repentance brought about an internal transformation ; Asoka, the man and the ruler, was metamorphosed and his life acquired a new, sublime meaning. Yielding to the deepest appeal of humanity he took the supreme decision which has made his name immortal. In the moment of victory he decided to eschew all aggressive warfare and give up all thought of further conquest or territorial aggrandisement. From a conventional militarist, he became an ardent pacifist, one of the great enemies of war known to history. The Kautilyan ideal of the expanding state, the motivating force of Magadha's history since the sixth century, was completely abjured and peace, friendship and co-operation became the keynotes of his external policy. An unequivocal declaration of this change of attitude is made in SKE II : "It may occur to the unconquered frontier sovereigns : 'what is in the mind of the king in respect of us ?' This much alone is my wish in respect of the frontier sovereigns that they may understand this, namely, that the Beloved of gods desires that they should be unperturbed towards me, they should trust me and they should have only happiness, not misery, from me". Not satisfied with his own renouncement of war and violence, the emperor tried to create a *tradition of pacifism* in India and had the following earnest exhortation engraved on stone for the guidance of future generations of kings; 'Whatever sons and great grandsons of mine there are they should not think of making any new conquests.' '*The reverberation of the war-drums has been silenced*' says the royal scribe exultingly in Rock Edict IV, and the claim may be regarded as literally true for he undertook no more wars of conquest and no external power could have been rash enough to think of aggrandising itself at the cost of his mighty empire.

Thus does Asoka stand out as a pioneer of peace and international amity in history. At a time when war and conquest were regarded as normal vocation of kings and man was completely subordinated to the tenets of power-polities, he struck a different note that has found its echo in the minds and hearts of decent people of all ages and countries. We can well understand his importance if we compare the ideal adopted by him with the stormy careers of Cyrus and Alexander, extolled as great rulers by a large part of the civilised world in his day, and remember that the thirteenth Rock Edict contains one of the earliest protests against aggressive war, denouncing it as an unmitigated evil.

But it is perhaps a mistaken estimate of his policy that finds in it one of the principal causes of the speedy decline of Magadha after him. Sincere and deep-seated though it was, his pacifism was not of the type that ignores the realities of life and politics. There is no indication anywhere that under its influence he neglected or reduced the army or in any other way weakened the military organisation supporting the political fabric of the empire. On the other hand, there is some evidence that he maintained the defensive strength and the police power of the state at a high level in order to effectively meet external and internal challenges. Thus, in Rock Edict XIII, announcing his determination to give up aggressive warfare, we find him declaring that 'even if some one (evidently a neighbouring power) does me wrong it *will be forgiven as far as it can be forgiven.*' Apparently such a statement could emanate only from a monarch whose military strength compared very favourably with that of his contemporaries and who would not hesitate to make use of that strength, if necessary. Similarly, the stern warning issued to the turbulent forest tribes in the same edict,—'The beloved of gods *is not only compassionate but is also powerful* and tells them to repent *lest they should be slain,*'—also bespeaks an efficient coercive machinery at the emperor's command and the will to make use of it, though reluctantly enough. Wedded to a policy of peace and non-aggression, Asoka was by no means a mere visionary or dreamer, and, in accordance with the needs of the time, seems to have paid full heed to the military requirements of

the empire. He 'brought the steam-roller of the Magadhan aggression to a halt' but did not seek to demilitarise India. There is as such hardly any truth in the accusation of some modern writers that by his pacificism he weakened the military foundations of the Magadhan empire and was responsible for its speedy disintegration. His policy of non-aggression was not incompatible with, and indeed went hand in hand with, a high degree of military efficiency and was by no means detrimental to the security of the empire. This point will be further elucidated in a later part of this work.

Inscriptions throw light on the dealings of Asoka with some of his contemporary powers after the introduction of the new policy. True to his declaration, he entered into active friendly relations with the rulers of Chola, Pandya, Satiyaputa, Keralaputa and Tambapanni (Ceylon) in the south and maintained the traditional alliance of his house with the Hellenistic kingdom of Syria and Western Asia which was at this time being ruled by Antiochos II Theos (Yavanaraja Antiyoka). His policy of friendship extended even beyond the realm of Antiochus and embraced the kingdoms of Antigonus Gonatas of Macedon, Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt, Magas of Cyrene (N. Africa) and Alexander of Corinth or of Epirus. The emperor was not only in diplomatic correspondence with all these rulers but even went to the extent of spending a part of the Imperial revenues over works of public utility such as providing medical facilities, digging wells, and planting trees along the roads, in their territories. They, on their part, apparently fully reciprocated his friendly advances and accorded facilities to his missionaries to preach the Dhamma in their respective kingdoms. The king of Ceylon, Tissa, specially became a great friend of his, exchanged embassies and presents with him and was converted to Buddhism under his influence.

The turbulent stream of Magadha's expansionism was, so to say, dammed across and diverted into an altogether different channel by Asoka. There was just a chance that the empire of Magadha would, had not its growth been so abruptly halted, develop into a world empire like that of Rome and attain the apex of political and military greatness. That the humane politics of Asoka probably prevented this from happening is one of the most inspiring reflections of Indian history. A Magadhan empire extending outside the

geographical and cultural frontiers of India would, like its Roman counterpart, inevitably be the epitome of unlawful violence, slavery and exploitation. It is no mere high-flown sentiment but a just appreciation of the values of life to hold that the Indian people have been the richer by the non-possession of such an empire. There may be greater point in the criticism sometimes levelled against the policy of Asoka that it prevented the political unification of India itself by allowing the Tamil powers of the south to retain their freedom. But here also we must not be hasty in passing judgment. Are we sure that the Tamil area of the Far South had by now became culturally so homogeneous with the north as to justify its political amalgamation with the latter even by force, as in the case of Kalinga? Mere geographical unity would not suffice. If the Far South was as yet not an integral part of a 'cultural India' its subjugation would be an act of iniquitous aggression, rather than of legitimate national urgency. But opinion on the point must be reserved.

C. CONVERSION TO BUDDHISM

The shock of the Kalinga war roused the *Man* in Asoka and gave such a turn to his emotions that he was irresistibly attracted towards the teachings of the Buddha. It was, however, sometime before he finally gave up the faith of his father (which was probably the Vedic religion or Saivism) and embraced the creed of the Sakyan sage. The prevalent view that his conversion took place immediately after the war is not borne out by the evidence on record. We learn from the Minor Rock Edict I, which is generally supposed to be the earliest of his inscriptions and so may be taken to date from the 12th year after the coronation, that at the time of the setting up of the record the emperor '*had been an upasaka for two and a half years and somewhat more*' only. He must, therefore, have been converted to the new faith about nine and a half years after the coronation, i.e., about one and a half years after the Kalinga war. About the same time he is reported to have undertaken a pilgrimage to Bodhgaya, the place of his Master's Enlightenment (Rock Edict VIII), most probably to signalise his change of faith. A youngish monk, named Nigrodha, whom distorted legend represents as the posthumous and precocious son of Asoka's own elder brother Sumana, was probably responsible for his initial admittance into the Buddhist fold but he was soon superseded in the emperor's esteem by

a more venerable personage whose name is given as Moggaliputta Tissa by the southern Buddhist tradition and Upagupta by its northern counterpart. This celebrated Buddhist patriarch had a preponderating influence on the mind of Asoka and was largely instrumental in shaping the course of his life and activities.

The Minor Rock Edict I gives us an interesting piece of information about the spiritual progress of Asoka as a Buddhist. It is said that for about one year in the beginning, his devotion to the new religion remained more or less lukewarm. Then, in the 11th year of the coronation, he began to develop a more intimate contact with the Buddhist Order of monks (*sagha upagate*, *upyate*, *upayite* etc.) and became 'very zealous.' The expression *sagha upagate* etc. has been taken by some to mean that at this stage of his career he ceased to be an *upasaka* (lay devotee) and actually entered the Sangha as a recluse, combining in himself the functions of a monk and Head of the state. But such a view, besides being opposed to what we know about the nature of the early Indian monasticism, is contradicted by the language of the inscription itself which clearly states that at the time when it was engraved *the king was still an upasaka*. The statement in the MRE is obviously meant to convey only that after one year of indifferent *upasaka* hood Asoka began to come into closer touch with the pious and learned *bhikkhus* of the Buddhist Order and under their influence and instruction developed a greater liking for the essential principles and tenets for which Buddhism stood.[7] Moggaliputta Tissa was the foremost of such *bhikkhus*. The Chinese pilgrim I-tsing who visited India in the 7th century A. D. records to have seen a statue of Asoka in a monk's garb. This need not necessarily mean that the great Maurya was a monk and emperor at the same time. The statue might well represent the latest phase in his life when he may actually have abdicated the throne and turned a monk. Alternatively, it might be reminiscent of short periods when he approached the monks for religions instruction and, as a mark of courtesy to them, himself put on the garb of a recluse.[8]

Within the limits imposed by his royal office, the emperor endeavoured to live the life of a pious Buddhist. Himself he probably abjured meat diet altogether and reduced the number of animals slaughtered in the royal kitchen for purposes of soup to three only. The age-old institution of *virharayatra* was abolished and replaced

by *dharmayatra*, i. e., tours of piety. The king undertook pilgrimages to Buddhist holy places and worshipped the spots sanctified by the Master's presence. Inscriptions preserve the memory of visits paid by him to Sambodhi (Bodhgaya), Lumbinigrama (the birth-place of the Buddha), and the *stupa* of Kanakamuni Buddha in the *Tarai* of Nepal. At Lumbini, he ordered the exemption of the village from the usual religious cess *(bali)* and reduced its land-tax to one-eighth of the total produce.[9] The *stupa* of Kanakamuni he doubled to its original size. His zeal also found tangible expression in a large number of Buddhist edifices constructed by him in the different parts of the country. Tradition has it that he built as many as 84000 *stupas*. The number is a conventionally high one and need not be taken literally but we may be sure that Asoka erected a much larger number of Buddhist buildings than anyone else. It is probably to his enthusiasm for building that we owe the nuclei of the great *stupas* at Sanchi, Bharhut and Sarnath.

The acceptance of Buddhism by Asoka was naturally a source of strength to the Buddhists of the land and encouraged them to look up to him as the informal guardian of their interests. We may also be sure that his wishes and opinions carried great weight in the Buddhist fold and in the Bhabru Edict we do find him adopting an authoritarian attitude, however slight, towards the clergymen themselves in recommending certain scriptural texts for their special study. But the view of some influential Indologists that he formally assumed the headship of the Buddhist church and exercised supreme control over its internal matters lacks proof and betrays the want of a proper appreciation of the constitution of the Buddhist Sangha. The Sangha was, as we have seen, not a church in the accepted sense of the term. The ecclesiastical constitution perfected by the Buddha and his followers made no provision for a permanent central authority or official Head to order or to control or supervise the affairs of the local *viharas* which functioned as independent units. The power exercised by the official Head or central body in the other organisations and institutions was vested in Buddhism in the convention of the Chatudisa Sangha and could not be legally enjoyed by any single individual, however highly placed. In the Buddha's commonwealth, even the Maurya emperor was technically only a common citizen.

The Buddhist faith of Asoka has sometimes, though rarely,

been doubted but there is little real basis for scepticism on the point. Apart from the clear reference to the monarch's *upasakahood* and his intimate association with the Sangha in MRE I (one version of which employs the definitive expression 'openly a Sakya' and another 'a Buddha-Sakya' in place of the simple '*upasaka*' of others), we have also the testimony of the Bhabru edict in which we find him declaring his faith in the Buddhist Trinity in the approved fashion. 'You know, Reverend Sirs' says the king addressing himself to the monks, 'that I have faith in, and respect, for, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.' Further, in the same epigraph he applies the epithet Bhagavan (the Blessed One) to the Buddha and the appellation *dharmaparyaya* (expositions of Dharma) to certain Buddhist texts. Attention may also be drawn to the exultant observation of the king in the Sanchi version of the schism edict : 'The Sangha, both of monks and nuns, has been made whole *and shall remain so as long as my grandsons and great grandsons will rule and as long as the sun and moon will shine*'. The mere fact that Asoka took steps to crush the germinating seed of schism in the Buddhist Order might, taken by itself, not mean much, but it does not seem possible to deny that the fervent words quoted above are of a devout Buddhist happy over the success of a mission dear to his heart. Another indubitable proof of Buddhism being the personal religion of Asoka is provided by the fact that while the edicts refer to his several pilgrimages to Buddhist holy places there is no evidence anywhere of his ever having visited the sacred spots of any other religion. Outside the emperor's own inscriptions, the sculptures at Sanchi, executed only about a century after his death, include scenes from his life which leave no doubts about his Buddhist faith. In view of all this, it is certainly unreasonable to dismiss the testimony of the enormous mass of tradition—Indian, Burmese, Chinese, Nepalese, Tibetan, Korean and Japanese—testifying to his being a Buddhist as a late fabrication invented by the Buddhist monks to support the claims of a decadent monastic creed 'as the Jainas are known to have represented the emperor Akbar as a follower of their religion at a subsequent date.' It is to be remembered that Asoka is known as a Buddhist not only to Buddhist literary legend but also to the Rajatarangini, a Brahmanical work, which describes him as 'the follower of the Jina', i.e., of the Buddha, and credits him with building a large number of stupas in some parts of

Kashmir. There is no literary work or tradition—secular or religious, early or late—claiming Asoka as the follower of any other religion which clearly shows that the Buddhist claim regarding Asoka is not on a par with the Jaina claim regarding Akbar. It is pointed out that his partiality for Buddhism is also reflected in the 'association of the figures of some animals, which are revered in Buddhism as symbolising the Buddha and the different stages in his career, with his columns as forming their capitals', namely, the elephant, the bull, the horse and the lion.'[8a]

D. RELIGIOUS POLICY

The Bhabru edict of Asoka expresses the sweeping belief that whatever has been said by the Blessed Buddha has been well said. But the author of this enthusiastic statement was far from being an intolerant zealot and ranks as one of the greatest advocates of the sovereign virtue of religious toleration. The great diversity of creeds prevalent in his empire would in itself dictate a policy of toleration, as with most Achaemenian emperors of Persia. But in the case of the Indian monarch it was something more than a matter of mere policy—an article of faith which no change of circumstances could shake. In RE VII he gives vent to the noble wish that 'everywhere all sects should live in peace' and in Rock Edict XII he declares that he 'does reverence (*puja*) to men of all sects, whether ascetics or house-holders, by gifts and various other forms of honour.' In the edicts, he is seen continually emphasizing the importance of proper behaviour towards Brahmanas and Sramanas alike and there is no reason to doubt the truth of the claim (P E VII) that his *Dharmamaha-matras* were entrusted with the task of promoting the interests of 'Brahmanas, Sramanas, Sangha, Nigranthas, Ajivikas and whatever other sects (*pashanda*) there are.' That his munificence benefited non-Buddhists also is made clear by short dedicatory inscriptions recording the gift of some caves in the Barabar Hill to Ajivika monks by him. The Rajatarangini of Kalhana tells us that while he filled the countries of Sushkaletra and Vitasta with groups of *stupas* he also replaced the worn out enclosure of the temple of Vijayesvara (evidently a Saiva temple) by a new one and within it built two new shrines (also apparently dedicated to Saiva worship) called Asokesvara. The Brahmana historian of Kashmir was so favourably impressed with his liberality that he ascribed the birth of

his son, Jalauka, to the 'favour of Siva.' Even the outlandish Yavanas, with their partially un-Indian beliefs and practices, were not discriminated against and one of them, Tushaspha, is known to have been appointed to the high office of the governor of Kathiawar. Senart interpreted a particular passage in the MRE I as containing a boastful claim of Asoka that he had 'reduced into false gods' the Brahmanas who were regarded as gods on earth before him. But the faulty nature of the interpretation has been demonstrated by Levi who points out that there is no talk of 'showing up the Brahmanas or anybody' here. The passage simply means that the propagandism of Asoka had resulted in such a growth of moral virtues in the people that 'the gods who had hitherto remained aloof from them were now mixing with them.' Indeed it is difficult to see how the suggestion of Senart, implying an active, even malicious, hostility towards the Brahmanas on the part of Asoka, can be reconciled with the exhortation for seemly and respectful treatment to them that is of such frequent occurrence in the edicts. In PE IV we find Asoka instructing his officers to adhere to the principles of 'dandasamata' and 'vyavaharasamata' This is taken by some to mean that the king abolished the special legal privileges of the Brahmanas, including exemption from capital punishment and taxes. But Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri has shown that the 'samata' enforced by Asoka involed a curtailment of the discretionary powers of his own law-officers, the Rajjukas, and not of any privileges the Brahmanas may really have enjoyed in the eyes of law, which in itself is extremely doubtful [PHAI, p. 359].

The emperor not only adopted tolerations as his policy of state but also made vigorous efforts to promote harmony and good will among the votaries of the various religious sects in his empire. A special edict published by him (Re XII) sets forth his views on the subject. It was his conviction that 'one who honours one's own sect and condemns another's sect, all through attchment to one's own sect, so that he may illuminate his own sect, in reality by doing so injures, more assuredly, his own sect.' Accordingly, he recommended 'restraint of speech' (Vachaguti) in religious talks and extolled the concourse or concord (Samavaya) of the followers of the different creeds. He desired that people 'should listen to the Dharma of each other and wish to hear more of it.' This, he rightly concludes, would 'make all sects possessed of wide learning (bahusruta) and good doctrines (kalyanagama)', and would lead to the illumination of Dhamma (Dhammassa dipana). These

splendid ideas were propounded by him because he was anxious to secure the 'growth of the essential matter' (Saravadhi) in all religions.

Asoka, thus, was a tolerant king and his RE XII is the unique record of the most enlightened views ever expressed on the necessity of religious toleration and harmony in the ancient world. But he was at the same time too sincere a moralist and too profound a humanist to grant the seal of his approval to the corrupt and cruel practices upheld by many religions of the time and did not hesitate to condemn or suppress them. Chief among these practices was the cult of animal sacrifices occupying the central place in the Brahmanical religion. The emperor abolished this barbarous institution though in doing so he must have incurred the displeasure of those traditionally attached to it. He spoke disparagingly of the numerous rites and ceremonies (mangala) that the ignorant masses, specially the womenfolk, were accustomed to perform. This may have been regarded by some as a deviation from his professed rule of toleration but the moralist in him would make no compromise on the point. It has been argued that the order prohibiting animal sacrifices applied, not to the whole empire, but to the capital or even to the royal palace only, but there is little warrant for such a view.

E. THE DHAMMA AND ITS PROPAGATION

The adoption of Buddhism completed the process of internal transformation that had been going on in Asoka since the Kalinga war. Under the benign influence of the Buddha's teaching, the seed of piety planted by the war sprouted forth and filled his heart with the fragrance of idealism and the glow of moral earnestness. The vision of a morally rejuvenated world loomed large before the Buddhist Asoka and it became his supreme purpose to endeavour to make life happier and purer through the propagation of his Master's message. Having discarded the ideal of Digvijaya or Saraskyavijaya (conquest achieved through war or violence), he placed the ideal of Dhammavijaya, i. e., diffusion of Dhamma, before him. To this end he now harnessed the vast material resources of his empire as also the remarkable personal vigour of his character. It was a unique historical phenomenon—the Head of a great empire turning a moral reformer and requisitioning the vast resources at his command to further the noble cause for which the Buddha had stood.

With only a few exceptions the extant edicts of Asoka are all devoted to the definition and inculcation of what he considered to be

Dhamma. The king taught that the essence of *Dhamma* lies in "little impiety *(apasinavo)*, doing much good *(bahukayane)*, compassion *(daya)*, liberality *(dane)*, truthfulness *(sache)*, purity *(sochaye)*" [PE II], gentleness *(madave)*, saintliness *(sadhave)* [PE VII], restraint *(samyama)*, purity of thought *(bhavasudhi)*, gratefulness *(katannta)* and steadfast loyalties *(didabhatita)* [RE VII]. The various *mangalas* (rites and ceremonies) that people perform on occasions like birth, marriage, sickness and starting on a journey 'are of little consequence' [RE X] and the real *mangala* is the *mangala* of *Dhamma* *(Dhammamangala)* which consists in 'not taking life *(anarambho prananam)*, not injuring creatures *(abihisa bhutanam)*, proper behaviour towards relatives, friends and acquaintances *(mitasanstutajnatinan sampatipati)*, proper behaviour and liberality to Brahmanas and Sramanas *(Bamhanasamanam sampatipati danam cha)*, obedience to father and mother *(mataripitari susrusa)*, obedience to elders *(thaira susrusa)*, proper behaviour towards servants and slaves *(dasabhatakamhi sampatipati)*, 'moderate spending and moderate hoarding' *(apavyayata apabhandata)*. Evil passions like ferocity *(chandiye)*, anger *(kodhe)* pride *(mane)* and jealousy *(issa)* are 'conducive to sin' and 'lead to destruction' and must be completely abjured [PE III]. While it is easy to commit sin *(sukarambi papam)*, *Dhamma* is difficult to practise and no appreciable progress in the way of *Dhamma* can be made without 'great desire for *Dhamma* *(aga dhammakamata)*, intense self-examination *(aga palikha)*, willingness to listen to others *(aga susrusa)*, great fear of sin *(aga bhaya)* and great enthusiasm *(aga usaha)*' [PE I]. The practice of *Dhamma* is rewarded with welfare in this world *(hida)* and the next *(palata)*. It leads to the acquisition of *Svarga* (heaven) and 'generates endless merit in the life beyond' [RE XI]. *Svarga* can be obtained by the high and low alike, provided they are prepared to put forth sufficient exertion for it.

That is all, as Rhys Davids says: 'There is not a word about God or soul in it'....We have here no fine points of religion or philosophy, no astute expositions of doctrine or metaphysical dogma. The Dhamma of the edicts appears to be no religion in the accepted sense of the term but a social and ethical code, a simple definition of morality in the light of Indian thought. It is, in fact, the same traditional Indian ideal of 'good life' which the Buddha had made the basis of his discourses to lay people. The most important of such discourses is, as we have seen, the Sigalovada Sutta of the Digha Nikaya. Dr. Bhandarkar

pertinently points out that the *gathas* of this Sutta 'enumerate just those courses of conduct which Asoka is never tired of inculcating.' [Asoka 3, p. 409] Following the example of the Buddha himself, Asoka thus preached to the millions of 'housemen' in his empire and outside a simple religion of morality, love and philanthropy, seeking to bring about a moral revolution in the world through its diffusion. Non-distinctive and universal in character, the Dhamma taught nothing which would not be assented to by the votaries of the other religions of the time and, as such, could be propagated by Asoka among all sections of the people without detriment to his professed policy of religious toleration and without compromising his position at the Head of the state. It was, so to say, the essence or 'sara' of all religions, 'the sum-total of moral virtues which constitutes the commmon substratum of all religions.' Had the Buddha himself not said that his teaching was only 'the ancient wisdom of the land'? Asoka was anxious to emphasise this aspect of the Dhamma and there are passages in the edicts which clearly show that he presented it to the people in this light. Thus, in the Yerragudi version of the MREI Dhamma seems to be designated as '*porana pakati*' or the ancient usage of the country. In RE XIII we find the emperor observing that many of the behests of his Dhamma, viz., obedience to elders, obedience to father and mother, obedience to teachers, proper behaviour towards friends, acquaintances, helpers, slaves and servants and steadfast loyalty, were established among 'Brahmanas, Sramanas and other sects and householders.' In RE XII he makes the significant remark that if the followers of the different sects listen to and try to understand, the professions of each other, there will be an illumination of Dhamma [*Dhammassa dipana*]—an observation which cannot but be taken to mean that the king wished to draw the attention of the people to his Dhamma as the common meeting ground of all religions. It was in this reasonable, unaggressive fashion that Asoka strove to spread the doctrine of the Buddha and establish the regime of Morality thereby. Indeed such was the catholicity of his attitude that he nowhere asks the people to declare faith in the Buddhist Trinity and in the profusion of the edicts has not even once referred to any of the characteristic teachings which distinguished Buddhism more or less sharply from the other religions, e. g., Nirvana, Sambodhi, the Noble Eightfold Path, the Four Noble Truths, and the Chain of Causation. It was the humanitarian ethics of Buddhism that he wished to inculcate as a means of

universal moral rejuvenation and propagated it rather as a general religion than the creed of a particular sect.[11]

The simple nature of the contents of Dhamma and the non-mention of the Buddha and the distinguishing precepts of the Buddhist doctrine in the edicts have impelled some scholars to the conclusion that Asoka did not officially preach Buddhism. 'We must at the outset', Dr. R. K. Mookerji tells us, 'distinguish between his personal and public religion... The latter is certainly not Buddhism.' Speaking of the behests of Dhamma, Dr. R. S. Tripathi says pointedly : 'These are points common to all religions and so Asoka can hardly be accused of utilising his vast resources as sovereign in the interests of any particular creed.' V. Smiths also writes that the zeal of Asoka for Buddhism is not proved by his presentation of Dhamma (Asoka 3rd ed., p. 60). We cannot accept any such theory. If the Dhamma of the edicts is not Buddhism, why is Asoka hailed everywhere in Buddhist books and legends as a great patron and bene factor of the faith ? What are we to make of the statement in MRE I that his zeal for Dhamma was the result of his intimate association with the Sangha ? How do we explain the great increase in the popularity of Buddhism from the middle of the 3rd century B.C. ? There is no gainsaying that though the king presented the Dhamma to the people as the '*sara*' of all religions, his propaganda was a distinct service to Buddhism and was received as such by the people. The non-allusion to the distinctive teachings of Buddhism is easily explained if we remember that it was not the purpose of Asoka in the edicts to expound the philosophical fundamentals of the creed but only to inculcate its practical morality (*Sila*). *The exclusive emphasis on moral virtues itself points to Buddhism as the source of Asoka's Dhamma.* The moral element was, it is true, common to all the religions of his time, but while in the other faiths, such as Brahmanism, it had become more or less submerged underneath the load of liturgical or formal practices, in the Buddha's creed it was still uppermost. Indeed, Buddhism for the 'housemen'—and it was chiefly with the housemen in his empire and outside that Asoka was concerned—as set forth in the Sigalovada Sutta to whose close resemblance with the Dhamma of the edicts Dr. Bhandarkar has drawn attention and other texts, is hardly anything more than a mere set of moral duties. We may agree that the missionaries and officers who carried out the programme of Dhamma made no formal conversions, but

the way of life they inculcated was certainly more Buddhistic than anything else. Their enthusiastic work paved the way for the phenomenal success of the formal propaganda which the Buddhist monks carried on simultaneously with it.

'Asoka propagated the *Dhamma* with the zeal and earnestness of a missionary.' The measures adopted by him for its dissemination were many and varied and he frankly claims the credit for the originality of some of them. There were some aspects of the *Dhamma*, specially the one connected with principle of *ahimsa* or non-injury, which had little chance of gaining wide acceptance if unbacked by the coercive authority of the state. In the national life of India in the 3rd century B. C. *himsa* or violence played a large role. Meat formed a substantial part of the peoples' diet, sports involving fights of animals enjoyed great vogue, hunting was a popular pastime and the slaughter of animals and birds was a practice well established in religious ceremonies. In such an atmosphere the preachers' efforts alone could hardly be expected to be very effective in instilling the love of non-violence in the minds of men. Asoka, therefore, had to frame special rules and regulations *(Dhammaniyama)* for securing the maximum possible adherence to *ahimsa*. By a special enactment he suppressed the performance of animal sacrifices and abolished the rowdy *samajas* (festive gatherings) which appear to have been marked by much unbridled mirth, animal bouts and consumption of meat and liquor. He could, of course, not totally ban meat-eating and the slaughter of animals for this purpose had to be allowed to continue, but he made the animals which were 'neither eaten nor useful in any other way' entirely inviolable and also imposed restrictions on the killing of others. It must, however, be said to the credit of Asoka that it was only with great reluctance that he took recourse to *Dhammaniyama* and made use of the power of the state for the diffusion of *Dhamma*. As he himself points out in PE VII, " *Dhammaniyama* is of little consequence." He was evidently aware that though coercion may succeed in inducing a superficial propriety of behaviour it is powerless to bring about that genuine change of heart which is the true stamp of *Dharma* and the hallmark of virtue. This latter miracle, the king believed, could be achieved only by intensive propaganda *(nijhati)* and accordingly devoted himself to it.

It would appear that on occasions the royal enthusiast himself donned the robe of a missionary and preached *Dhamma* to the

people. While out on *Dharmayatras*, he spared time from his multifarious duties of state to mix with the common men and instruct them in the path of *Dhamma*. Not satisfied with this personal effort, he converted the gigantic bureaucratic machine of the Magadhan empire itself into a propaganda engine and made full use of it. He ordered his officers known as *Yukta*, *Rajjuka* and *Pradesika* to go on circuit every fifth year for the purpose of propagating *Dhamma* as also for the discharge of routine administrative duties.[13] In one of the pillar edicts the claim has been made that his officers, whether of the high, middle or low category, were everywhere engaged in the task of promulgating Dhamma and a similar duty was enjoined even upon the *Antamahamatras* or Wardens of the Marches.[14] 'Instructions in *Dhamma*' (*Dhammnusathi*) and 'Proclamations of '*Dhamma*'(*Dhamma-savana*) thus became integral parts of the governmental business and along with the other official duties claimed a substantial share in the attention of the royal employees from the head of state down to the low placed *Purushas*. In the thirteenth year of the coronation the emperor created a new class of officers, called *Dharmamahamatra*, whose chief duty consisted in *Dhammadhithna* (establishment of *Dhamma*) and *Dhammavadhi* (growth or promotion of *Dhamma*), though sundry other matters were also entrusted to their care.[15] A year before the appointment of the *Dharmamahamatras* the king had begun the unique practice of giving wide and effective publicity to the tenets and fundamentals of *Dhamma* by having them engraved, in the form of *dhammalipis* or scripts of *Dhamma*, on rocks and pillars all over his extensive empire and continued it with unabated vigour to the end of his long reign. He also made use of edifying shows to induce the people to follow the path of *Dhamma*. These shows were probably enacted on the occasion of *samajas* and consisted in the presentation of such 'celestial scenes' as aerial chariots (*vimaṇa*), elephants (*hasti*) and columns of fire (*agnikhanda*) symbolising the perfect bliss which is the portion of the pious householders in the next world (*svarga*).[16] They seem to have been the precursors of the modern *chowkis* taken out on the occasion of Dashehra and other festivals all over India. Last, but certainly not the least, Asoka organised an extensive network of special preaching missions within the empire and outside. The following account of the activities of these missions is given in Rock Edict XIII in connection with the introduction of the policy of *Dhammavijaya*.

'And this conquest has been won repeatedly by *Devanampriya* here and among all (his) borderers, even as far as at (the distance of) six hundred *yojanas*, where the Yona king named Antiyoka (is ruling) and beyond this Antiyoka where four kings (are ruling), (viz. the king) named Turumaya, (the king named) Antikini, (the king) named Maka, (and the king) named Alikasudara, (and) towards the south (where) the Cholas and the Pandyas (are ruling) as far as Tamraparni (Ceylon).

Likewise, here in the king's territory, among the Yonas (Yavanas) and Kambojas, among the Nabhakas and Nabhapanktis, among the Bhojas and Pitinikas, and the Andhras and Palidas, everywhere (people) are conforming to Devanampriya's instruction in morality.

Even those whom the envoys of Devanampriya do not reach, having heard of the duties of morality, the ordinances, and the instructions in morality of Devanampriya, are conforming to morality and will conform to it.'

The certain and probable identifications of the kingdoms, tribes and princes named in the above passage show that efforts were made to inculcate *Dhamma* not only in India but also in Ceylon, Afghanistan and the Greek countries of Western Asia, South-Eastern Europe and Northern Africa. The king's envoys carried the wisdom of India almost to the limits of the civilised world in the west and the clarion call emanating from the Imperial missionary at Pataliputra reverberated in the cities and villages of three continents. It was the most comprehensive scheme of propaganda undertaken in the ancient world, unique alike by reason of its nobility of purpose and the enthusiasm with which its author pursued it.

What was the upshot of this great movement of the 3rd century B. C. which had its birth in India? Its originator himself had high notions about the outcome of his activity. He claimed that people were now conforming to Dhamma everywhere, even in places which his envoys could not visit personally. In MRE I, we find the even more confident assertion that as a result of his propaganda 'the gods who were hitherto unmixed with men in Jambudvipa had been made to mix with them.' In yet another place in the edicts (RE IV), the royal author advances the claim that through his efforts there had been such a growth of non-taking of life, non-injury to creatures,

proper behaviour towards relatives, proper behaviour towards Brahmanas and Sramanas, obedience to father and mother and obedience to elders 'as there had not been for many hundreds of years.' Such an estimate obviously reflects the abundant reformer's optimism of Asoka rather than the actuality of things which, one can well understand, fell painfully short of the bright picture drawn here. The world evidently experienced no such marveollus moral or spiritual rebirth in the 3rd century B. C. as is implied by these statements. The king's propaganda may have made some contribution to the promotion and confirmation of some concrete virtues of Indian life, e.g., the sense of respect and regard for animal life with its corollary of nism, and the tendency to set up philanthropic works and vene- mendicants of all sects, but it is impossible at this distance of time to judge the extent of its success by this intangible standard. What stands out as a concrete fact of history is that the pious endeavours of Asoka had the effect of making Buddhism a world religion. The official programme of the emperor, coupled with the vigorous efforts of the Buddhist Sangha, gave a tremendous lift to Buddhism and from a more or less local creed raised it to the position of an international religion. The details of this will be given at a later place.

An eminent modern writer accuses Asoka of encouraging disproportionate spirituality and otherworldliness in India by his religious propaganda and thus disturbing the neat balance that Indian civilisation had struck between the material and spiritual aspects of culture. With due humility it must be said that there is little substance in the criticism. There is hardly anything in the *Dhamma* of Asoka that may be described as 'spiritual' or conducive to indifference for the material side of life. That *Dhamma*, as we have seen, is simply a code of social and ethical conduct and its purpose is to *regulate*, not curtail, the interest in material prosperity. The emperor no doubt holds up the ultimate goal of *Svarga* before us but mundane welfare is by no means ignored by his *Dhamma*. Indeed in some places *hida* and *palata* are actually found juxtaposed in the edicts as twin objectives of *Dhamma*. The details of Asoka's life preserved by tradition and epigraphs strongly suggest that he was himself far from being inordinately otherwordly-minded or 'spiritual' in the accepted sense of the word. The keen interest he took in founding towns and creating beautitul objects of art bespeaks a robust mind suffi-

ciently interested in the good things of life and the message of that mind could hardly have been detrimental to the material progress of India.

F. EXTENT OF EMPIRE

Though Kalinga was the only conquest of Asoka, he ruled over a vast territory whose limits were probably never exceeded in the history of India. The extent of this territory may be determined with a fair amount of accuracy on the basis of the findspots and the internal data of the edicts, 'with some help from tradition'. In the north-west, the edicts are found as far as Shahbazgarhi and Manshera in the Peshawar and Hazara Districts respectively and, beyond these, at Lamghan in the Kabul Valley. Internally, the edicts (RE V and XIII) speak of the Yavanas, generally supposed to be the residents of Alexandria near Kabul, as a semi-independent people living in the empire, and represent Amtiyoka (Antiochus II Theos of Syria and Persia) as a 'frontager' or neighbouring king. The empire evidently extended as far as the Hindukush and the frontiers of Persia, as in the days of Chandragupta, and included the four satrapies to the west of the Indus the latter had acquired from Seleucus Nikator. The successors of Seleucus had made no attempt to recover the lost provinces and, as of old, the Maurya and the Seleucid dominions still bordered on each other about the eastern limit of Persia. In the north, the inclusion of Kashmir in the empire of Asoka is borne out by the Rajatarangini which, following earlier and apparently reliable authorities, mentions his name among the kings of that pleasant valley. The chronicle states that he was a 'sinless king, devoted to the teaching of the Jina (Buddha),....filled the Sushkaletra and Vitasta regions with groups of stupas....and founded the glorious town of Srinagari with 96 lakhs of prosperous houses.' To the south-east of Kashmir, Asoka's inscriptions occur at Kalsi (in the Dehradun Hills) and Rummindei and Nigliva in the Nepal Tarai. But the combined testimony of Taranath and the Nepalese Vamsavalis, probably not unsupported by monumental evidence, strongly suggests—though the nature of the evidence rules out a definite verdict on the point—that the political authority of the emperor was established over the entire valley of Nepal. Taranath refers to a revolt of the Nepalas suppressed by Asoka in the life-time of his father and the chronicles speak of a personal tour of the emperor into Nepal on which he was accompanied by his daughter Charumati. It is said

that in Nepal he founded the town of Lalitapattana with a temple in the centre and four stupas at the cardinal points of the perimeter. 'These latter survive to this day and conform in shape and size to the Sanchi and Gandharan types of stupa, a fact testifying to their genuine antiquity'. Tradition goes on to say that Charumati was married to Devapala, a native Kshatriya of Nepal, who established the city of Devapattana. Eastward, the discovery of a Mauryan Brahmi inscription—the epigraph does not specifically refer to the Mauryas but the system of administration revealed by it hardly leaves any doubt about its being a Maurya document—at Mahasthanagarh (Bogra District of Bengal) and a tradition recorded in the Ceylonese chronicles to the effect that Asoka came in person to the port of Tamralipti (modern Tamluk, Midnapore District of Bengal) to see his son Mahendra off to Ceylon, clearly show that his authority extended to Bengal. Beyond Bengal, Kamarupa or Assam was probably independent; there is no evidence that the Mauryas ruled there. The imperial writ ran from Orissa and Ganjam in the south-east where two sets of the Rock Edicts have been discovered at Dhauli and Jaugada respectively to Kathiawar and the Bombay coast. In the latter regions the inscriptions of Asoka occur at Girnar (Kathiawar) and Sopara (Thana District of Bombay) and an incidental reference in the Junagarh Inscription of Rudradaman (150 A. D.) furnishes the name of Yavanaraja Tushaspha, his governor in Surashtra. Towards the south, the edicts mention the kingdoms of Chola, Pandya, Satiyaputa and Keralaputa as independent neighbours. But as the northward extension of these at this period is uncertain this does not enable us to determine the southern boundary of the empire. It must, however, have stretched at least as far as the northern part of Mysore for three copies of the MRE I have been discovered in Chitraldrug, a northern district of the state. We may tentatively accept the conclusion of V. Smith that 'the southern boundary may be taken to be represented by an imaginary line drawn to connect the mouth of the river Pennar on the Coromandel coast with that of the river Kalyanpuri in Malabar'. It is thus seen that the empire of Asoka embraced practically the whole of the Indian sub-continent exclusive of Assam and the Far South, as also the southern part of Afghanistan, and possibly Nepal. It is not without justification that he refers to his dominions as 'extensive' (*Mahalaka*) or 'the earth' (*Prithvi*) in the edicts. A recent attempt to locate the Yavanas, Nabhaka-Nabhapamktis and the Kambojas mentioned in the edicts as semi-independent subjects in Bactria, Bokhara-Samarakand and the Pamirs respectively does not merit serious consideration. Tibetan and Chinese traditions trace the foundation of the kingdom of Khotan (Kustana) in

Chinese Turkistan to certain events in Asoka's reign but the evidence in hand is not adequate enough to enable us to say that the Tarim basin formed a part of the Maurya Empire.

Hiuen Tsang, travelling in India several centuries after Asoka, records having seen religious, edifices, allegedly built by him, from Kapisa (Kafiristan), Nagara (Jalalabad) and Kashmir in the northwest to all the four divisions of Bengal (Karnasuvarna, Tamralipti, Pundravardhana and Samatata) in the east. About Kashmir, he refers to a tradition that Asoka 'made a gift' of the country to Buddhist Arhants while his statement about Kamarupa (Assam) that Buddhism did not make a headaway there and no monastery was ever built inside its limits, indirectly corroborates its exclusion from Maurya dominions. But we shall perhaps not be justified in making the pilgirm's testimony regarding the distribution of Asoka's buildings the basis of any precise conclusions as to the extent of the empire. When he speaks of an Asokan edifice, 'we cannot, strictly speaking, infer anything more than a structure of archaicstyle,' and atleast one of the 'Asokan' stupas noticed by him in the south seems to have been situated outside the orbit of the empire.[20a]

G. AS A RULER

It is impossible to accept the view of some critics that Asoka lost all interest in his civil duties after his conversion to Buddhism and left the government of the realm in the hands of his officers. The unchallengeable testimony of the edicts clearly shows that far from generating in Asoka an indifference for the duties of his kingly office, the conversion actually led to a great augmentation of his zeal for them. For conscientious discharge of responsibility Buddhist Asoka is anybody's equal in the annals of kingship. He was an able administrator, fully conscious of the sacred trust reposed in him as the temporal head of the state and the emperor of the Indian people. Like his august grandfather, he envisaged the relation between him and his subjects as that between a father and his children and made this benevolent paternalism the bedrock of his administration. 'All men are my children' says he in SKE I, 'and just as I desire for my children that they may have all happiness in this world and the next so do I desire for all men'. [SKEI]. His officers also he advised to develop an attitude of paternal concern for the people under their charge. 'As a person, having entrusted his child to an expert nurse, becomes assured ······ so have I created the Lajukas (Rajjukas) for the welfare of the people' [PEVI]. He probably struck a new note in the theory of kingship when, as king, he declared himself to be a 'debtor to all living beings' and the discharge of the debt as his highest concern.

He regarded nothing as higher duty than striving for the maximum welfare of all *(na hi kammataram sarva-lokahitatya)*.

The pursuit of these lofty ideals naturally imposed a heavy strain of work on him and made him 'an ideal public servant, the most hard worked of his officers'. There is reason to believe that he personally supervised the working of the bureaucracy and such was his zeal for public business that he undertook to attend to it at all hours and places. "For a long time past" runs a royal edict "it has not happened that business has been dispatched and that reports have been received at all hours. Now by me this arrangement has been made that at all hours and in all places—whether I am dining, or in the ladies' apartments, in my bedroom, or in my closet, in my carriage, or in the palace gardens, the official reporters should report to me on the people's business, and I am ready to do the people's business in all places...... I have commanded that immediate report must be made to me at any hour and in any place, because I never feel full satisfaction in my efforts and dispatch of business. For, the welfare of all folk is what I must work for and the root of that again is in effort *(utthana)* and dispatch of business *(arthasantirana)*." It appears that the emperor undertook tours of inspection over his extensive dominions, though in those days of meagre and difficult communication he could naturally not have visited all the different parts of the empire.

The decision to receive the reporters at all hours was a novelty so far the Mauryan system of administration was concerned. Asoka generally retained intact the administrative framework that he had inherited from his predecessors but within the limits of practicability also made efforts to humanise or liberalise it. The most important of his reforms or innovations lay in the field of judicial administration to which he paid great attention. As already stated, in the 13th year after the coronation he created a special class of officers called *Dhammamahamata*. The new dignitaries were appointed chiefly for the promulgation of *Dhamma*, superintendence of charities and promotion of the interests of the various religious groups ('Sangha, Brahmanas, Nirgranthas, Ajivikas and whatever other *pashandas* there are') but they had also an important judicial function to discharge. As Rock Edict V puts it, they concerned themselves 'with (money) grants, to and unfettering or the release of (anyone) who is bound with fetters accor-

ding as he is encumbered with progeny, is beguiled or is aged.' Asoka thus followed a more enlightened judicial policy than his predecessors and created an appropriate machinery to implement it. For practical reasons, he did not do away with the death penalty but to the condemned persons he granted a respite of three days to enable them to put their affairs in order and to prepare themselves for the next world. Tradition affirms that he abolished judidial torture. This would be an act of revolutionary significance but unfortunately it is not sufficiently well documented as there is no reference to it in the inscriptions. The emperor was pained to see that he was ill-served by his judicial officers in the outlying parts of the empire, specially the newly conquered province of Kalinga, where people were harassed, tortured and sentenced to terms of imprisonment without sufficient reason. To put an end to this state of affairs he adopted the practice of sending out every fifth year a high placed *mahamatra* to see if the city magistrates *(nagaravyavaharaka)* and other judicial officers of Kalinga were doing their work properly and commanded the prince-viceroys *(kumara)* of Ujjayini and Takshasila also to send out similar supervising officers at intervals not exceeding three years. In the 26th year after the coronation he granted to the *Rajjukas*, 'set over many hundred thousand of people', full discretion in the matter of awarding honours (*abhihava*) and punishment (*danda*) so that 'they may discharge their duties confidently and fearlessly.' The purpose of this reform to which the king seems to have attached great importance was probably to ensure conditions of *dandasamata* (uniformity of punishment) and *vyavaharasamata* (uniformity of legal procedure) all over his empire but neither the exact connotation of these expressions nor how the reform in question could lead to the desired goal can be clearly perceived at present.[21]

The enlightened nature of Asoka's government is also borne out by the attitude he adopted towards the wild tribes (*atavi*) inhabiting the more inaccessible regions of the empire. "The wild tribesmen of hill and forest were a constant source of danger to the more settled parts of the empire. It would seem that the earlier kings had kept them in check by ruthless campaigns of externment." But the Beloved of Gods 'even reasons with the forest tribes and seeks to reform them.' It was a surprisingly modern note struck by Asoka and reminds us of the policy of the Indian Republic towards the

aboriginal tribes and the frontier clans. It may however be pointed out that notwithstanding his intention to reconciliate and educate the forest tribes, Asoka was fully prepared to use force to suppress them if their turbulence could not be controlled by peaceful methods.

Of the executive reforms of Asoka very little is known. As indicated elsewhere he instituted quinquennial *anusamyana* or circuits for his *Yuktas, Rajjukas,* and *Pradesikas.* These periodical tours were meant partly for the preaching of *Dhamma* and partly for 'other works', i. e., routine government work. *Anusamyana* is mentioned by Kautilya also but the credit for making it a regular feature of the Mauryan administration is probably to be given to Asoka.

True to his determination to make efforts for *sarvalokahita,* Asoka launched an ambitious programme of public works over which a substantial part of the state's revenue must have been spent. Throughout the length and breadth of the empire communications were improved by planting shady trees along the roads. Wells were dug, at the interval of eight *kosa,* watering places were at up and probably rest houses were also erected. Medical facilities were developed. Arrangements were made for the treatment of men and beasts and planting of medicinal herbs, roots and fruit-trees was undertaken, wherever they were not available. The great irrigational project of the Sudarsana Lake in Kathiawar was finally completed. For the benefit of his Kashmiri subjects Asoka built the town of Srinagari and in Nepal also the cities of Lalitapattana and Devapattana were founded in his time. The establishment of these townships seems to indicate a wholesome economic policy which attahced due importance to the development of backward areas. If the Bodhisattvavadana-kalpamala is to be believed, the emperor made special efforts to suppress piracy in the territorial waters.

Art received its due share of attention. The emperor was all out to suppress the vulgar and rowdy forms of enjoyment but he was not a bigoted puritan and was apparently a sincere admirer of the arts. He greatly enriched the aesthetic tradition of India by borrowing elements of stone sculpture from Persia where the technique had already attained a fairly high level of development in the Achaemenian period, and thus created a brilliant school of official art which is represented by his famous columns with their superb animal capitals. The rock caves excavated at

his orders in the Barabar Hill for the residence of Ajivika monks are the first of their kind in the country and mark the beginning of that great art tradition which culminates in the halls of Ajanta and Ellora. The numerous stupas said to have been built by him must have given a great fillip to the progress of religious architecture in India. If Taranath is to be believed the art of painting also flourished under him and master painters executed wonderful frescoes. But no tangible remains of these have been discovered so far.

The gloom surrounding India's past has not shifted sufficiently even from the reign of Asoka to enable us to have a clear, intimate view of it. But the sources, such as they are, do give the impression of a period of all-round prosperity—comparatively speaking, of course—when the country received the highest benefits that Despotism might bestow. Asoka was not an abbot or monk on the throne of monarchs, as some would represent him to be ; he was 'every inch a king.' But a king as high-minded as can be, the most enlightened of the world's Enlightened Despots.

H. AN ESTIMATE

Asoka is undoubtedly the brightest luminary in the firmament of Indian history. In their own way Chandragupta Maurya, Samudragupta, Harshavardhana, Babar, Shershah, Akbar and Sivaji are also great names and a few others have carved out a sufficiently high place for themselves. But by dint of his high idealism, his noble conception of his duties and reponsibilities as king, his unflagging exertion in the service of the people and the unsurpassable humanity of his character Asoka towers far above them all. Some of them may have been greater conquerors, doughtier fighters and better administrators than he, but none contributed to the strengthening of the true spirit of India like him; none also did so much to rouse the real, internal consciousness of nationhood in the Indian peoples. By giving to his empire, which embraced nearly the whole of India, a 'visible unity of culture,' by diffusing one language throughout the length and breadth of the country through the edicts and by concentrating attention on the fundamentals of Indian thought, he contributed more than anyone else to the forging of a strong bond of unity in the country. While the others, including Akbar, were content to follow the beaten tracks, he was a bold experimenter who set a novel task before him and pursued an altogether original pro-

gramme. The activities of the others were limited. He carried the message of India far beyond her geographical frontiers and secured for her the moral leadership of the entire civilised world. At no other point in her long history did India enjoy such a truly eminent status in the comity of nations as under him. *Others* were individuals; the 'philosopher king' symbolises the aspirations and culture of India. It is a fitting homage that Free India has paid to him by adopting the capital of his Sarnath Pillar for the Republic's state seal.

The celebrated Maurya easily takes his place among the greatest rulers of the world itself. In more than one way his ideals and activities make him one of the most striking figures of history. His sincere attempt to end war imparts a unique interest to him in the annals of kings. Among the rulers and chiefs of the world, there has been no other whose voice sounds so clear and strong in the denunciation of war and in support of universal peace. His crusade to end war did not have any appreciable success, but more than two thousand years after his death the realisation that in the policy adopted by him alone lies the salvation of mankind is now being slowly driven home and the world is waking to the wisdom of this master-mind of the third century B. C. His bold and positive programme for the promotion of moral virtues in his empire and outside is without a parallel elsewhere. States of the world have always been active in the suppression of immorality and anti-social practices, but the idea of taking concrete measures for the dissemination of 'good life', for the moral upliftment of the people, was a unique one and, irrespective of its success or failure, marks its author as a great monarch, the temporal counterpart of Jesus Christ and Gautama Buddha. Besides, Asoka also figures as the releaser of one of the principal fertilising forces of history. By assisting Buddhism to become a world religion, he exerted a profound influence on the history of a large part of Asia and set in motion cultural and social tendencies which attained their full fruition many centuries after him. His part in shaping the course of human affairs can hardly be regarded as less important than that of any other historical personage. It is therefore in the fitness of things that his place in history has usually been assigned by the side of the greatest leaders of mankind. Various authorities have likened him to such celebrities as Ikhnaton, Constantine, Marcus Aurelius, Khalifa Omar, St. Paul, Alfred and Charlemagne, and very rarely has he been found to suffer in the

comparison. Deeply impressed by the noble sentiments expressed by him in the edicts and the strenuous efforts he put forth to translate them into action, as also by his success in spreading the 'sweet and reasonable' teaching of the Buddha, one of the most eminent authors of the modern times has bestowed the following high encomium on him :

'... Asoka worked sanely for the real needs of men. Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines almost alone as a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet and even India, though it has left his doctrine, present the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory today than have ever heard the names of Constantine and Charlemagne.'

Few will be found today to disagree with the above estimate of H. G. Wells. Men like Asoka shed lustre over the gloom of history and prevent it from degenerating into a record of crime. They supply the corrective which wrenches away the shining mantle of glamour draped by romantic fancy round the Alexanders, Napoleons and Hitlers of the world by pointing attention to the nobler aspects of life.

Asoka of the edicts was a man of no great literary accomplishments. His language is 'rugged, involved and full of repressions' and is altogether lacking in the stylistic beauty of the compositions of Ikhnaton of Egypt with whom he shares many things in common. It is also pointed out that he nowhere gives the impression of being highly learned except in respect of the religious literature of the Buddhists. Nevertheless, as we scrutinise the contents of the mass of edicts, we find a vital and interesting personality unfolding itself before our eyes. Generous and affectionate of disposition, the emperor obviously possessed the advantage of a keen intellect which could penetrate under the surface of things and distinguish the essential from the non-essential as his repeated emphasis on the 'growth of essence' in all religions clearly shows. With a mind swayed by the loftiest idealism he naturally had a high sense of duty and was endowed with a fair amount of practical ability which enabled him to 'pilot the ship of the state through the storm and stress of a

great war' and to efficiently control the administration of the empire under his revised, liberalised laws. Though his avowed policy was of religious toleration he did not lack the courage of conviction to ban animal sacrifices and openly decry the futile ceremonies performed by the people on various occasions. Deeply religious, he paid frequent visits to the holy places of his faith, worshipped the sanctified spots and obviously delighted in the company of holy persons and sages. At the same time, he did not spurn the secular delights of life and the inscriptions depict him as fond of horse-riding and the pleasures of the royal gardens and ranches. He abhorred vulgarity and corrupt mirth but was no disdainer of the aesthetic values of life and was a great patron of art. The high tide of his emotions was kept in check by a strong common sense and a firm grip on the realities of life. It is remarkable that in spite of his profound remorse over the conquest of Kalinga he did not restore the kingdom to its original rulers. 'For all his humanity he did not abolish the death penalty'.

He had his weak points also. We have seen that his estimate of the success of his moral propaganda savours of a tendency to over-optimism and there are lines in the edicts which have been interpreted by some as revealing traces of a suppressed megalomania. But it transgresses all reasonable limits to dub the great king as a hypocrite whose edicts were meant 'rather to conceal than reveal the greater part of his personality'[22] or to hold that 'all the edicts bear traces of a more or less troubled mind and the latest ones are positively full of insensate babbling.[23] Is it simple cynicism that is at the root of such criticism ? Or some more serious perversity ?

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. According to the Divyavadana, Asoka received the assistance of the minister Khallataka and his son Radhagupta in the war against Susima.

2. The edict in question refers actually only to the harems of the brothers. But one feels inclined to accept the contention of Dr. B. M. Barua that the prominence given to the brothers can be explained only on the assumption that they were living at the time and were recognised as the heads of their households.

3. The Ceylonese chronicles clearly state that there was an interval of four years between the seizure of power by Asoka and his formal coronation.

4. Senart, however, points out that these stories about the cruelty of Asoka before the conversion, both in the northern and southern versions, may have been inspired partly by the slaughter and bloodshed of the Kalinga war for which Asoka was responsible. [Inscriptions, etc., p. 101.]

5. For the nature of Asoka's Dhammaijaya, See Appendix.

6. The Mahavamsa requires us to believe that Nyagrodha was a posthumous son of Sumana, the elder brother of Asoka, and was only seven years old at the time when he converted the emperor. The Dipavamsa, however, speaks of no such connection.

7. The view that Asoka became a monk in the 11th year is in conflict with the Buddhist tradition itself. We have it in the Mahavamsa that in his message to the king of Ceylon Asoka said that he had 'become a lay disciple in the faith of the Sakyan son.' This was in the 18th year after the coronation. The Divyavadana also shows that the emperor remained in lay life upto a fairly advanced age at least when he married Tishyarakshita. As pointed out by Professor N. K. Sastri, 'the phrase Sangham-upa- in the Minor Rock Edict is too vague too convey the precise idea of ordination (pabbajja) which must have been well-established by Asoka's time.' There are no indubitable instances in the early period of Indian kings or householders being monks also at the same time. The instances quoted by V. Smith are either foreign or of too late a date to have any real bearing on the question. Dr. Raychaudhuri draws our attention to a Sramana-mahamatra mentioned in an early inscription at Nasik (first century B. C.) but the expression has been taken by Senart to signify 'the officer in charge of the Sramanas.' The analogy of Kutakanna Tissa cited by the reputed scholar is also inapt. The Mahavamsa nowhere says that Tissa was king and monk at the same time.

8. It has been pointed out that in the Milindaprasna, king Milinda is represented as approaching the thera Nagasena attired as a monk (munibhavam upagatva) at a certain stage of their discussion.

8a. The elephant is supposed to symbolise the conception; the bull, the nativity; the horse, the Great Departure and the lion, the Sakyasimha or the lion of the Sakyas. The forepart of an elephant is cut into the rock at Dhauli and the figure of an elephant is incised at Kalsi with the label gajatame or the 'best of elephants.' The elephant figure at Girnar is now lost but the accompanying label-seto hasti sarvalokasukhaharo nama —suggests that it stood for the Buddha.

9. 'Hida Bhagavan jate ti Lumminigame ubalike kate athabhagiya cha.'

10. The fact that a General Council of the Buddhist met in the time of Asoka itself seems to go against the theory of his headship of the Church. It is argued that the promulgation of the edict on Sanghabheda (the Sanchi-Sarnath-Kusambi Pillar Edict) shows that he possessed the power of interfering in the affairs of the Sangha. But the edict in question was

probably issued in response to a request of the Sangha itself after the third council had taken the decision to purge it of heresy and disruptionist element. Dr. Bhandarkar's contention that in the latter case there would be no necessity of communicating the edict to the local viharas as the resolution of the council would be well-known to them seems to lack point. What was communicated was not the resolution of the council, but the determination of the king to carry it out with the help of his temporal power. Similarly, the fact that in the Bhabru Edict Asoka is seen recommending seven texts for the perusal of the monks also cannot be taken as suggesting that he was in authority over them.' The polite language in which the edict is couched belies any such assumption.'

11. For a fuller discussion of the nature of Asoka's Dhamma See Appendix.

12. This is evident from the concluding portion of RE VIII which mentions 'visits to the people of the country, instructing them in Dhamma (dhammanusathi) and discussions with them on the same (dhammaparipuchcha) as a part of Dhammayata. (Dharmayatra)

13. RE III.

14. PE I.

15. RE V.

16. RE IV.

17. Bhandarkar, Asoka, third ed, p. 142.

18. Bhandarkar, op. cit., p. 220.

19. Charumati is also stated to have built a nunnery which stood at the village of Chhabail outside the towns of Devapattana.

20. The tradition, slightly differing in the two versions, ascribes the origin of the kingdom to two settlements, one founded by Kunala, the son of Asoka, or the officials of Taxila banished by the emperor for blinding him, and the other by a group of Chinese immigrants headed by a son of the Chinese emperor.

20a. This was the stupa near the capital of the Malakuta country. Malakuta obviously denotes the region which was included in the Pandya kingdom and Asoka himself tells us that Pandya was one of his 'independent frontagers.' According to Prof. N. K. Sastri, the stupa was built not by Asoka, but by his brother Mahendra (Age of the Nandas and Mauryas, p. 222). But this is what we read on p. 230 of Buddhist Records of the Western World, Vol. II : 'To the east of this is a stupa, the lofty walls of which are buried in the earth, and only the crowning part of the cupola remains. This was built by Asokaraja.'

21. It is tempting to suggest here and the suggestion has actually been made —that the emperor abolished all the legal inequalities which the ramification of the caste system had given rise to and recognised the principle of the 'equality of all, irrespective of caste or creed, in the eyes of law.' But such a view is not borne out by any independent evidence.

22. JRAS, 1926, p. 138.

23. Kern. quoted by Senart, IA 1919.

CHAPTER III

Fall of the Mauryas

Though, vague legend apart, there is no real authority for the contention of some that during his latter years Asoka somewhat, lost his grip on the affairs of the empire, there seems little doubt that the turning-point in the political fortunes of Magadha was reached within a few years of his death. After about three centuries of steady growth, the first empire of India now began to break up, and the pace of dissolution appears to have been considerably faster than that of the building-up. Very little authentic information is available about Asoka's own descendants who held the throne of Pataliputra upto 184 B. C. The dynastic lists of the later Mauryas in the various sources are highly discrepant and are little more than mere collections of names providing no safe basis for historical conclusions. Only one of these names, that of Dasaratha (said to be a grandson of Asoka), is corroborated by epigraphic testimony. Following the example of his illustrious ancestor, this prince made a donation of some caves in the Barabar Hill to monks of the Ajivika sect and recorded the gift in short inscriptions engraved in the interior of the caves. Other authentic names appear to be those of (a) Samprati, another grandson of Asoka, who probably ascended the throne after Dasaratha and is represented to have been a great patron of Jainism, (b) Salisuka (c.200 B. C.) about whom it is stated that 'though fond of theorising about Dharma, he was an unrighteous king and greatly oppressed his people' and (c) Brihadratha, the last of the dynasty. In 184 B. C. the last named sovereign was treacherously assassinated by his Brahmana general Pushyamitra and the illustrious house of the Mauryas which had now reigned supreme in the politics of India for 137 years passed into oblivion.

It is impossible, with the scanty material at our disposal, to reconstruct the full history of the Magadhan Empire under the successors of Asoka. But it appears certain that, lacking as they did the personal greatness of Chandragupta and Asoka, the later

Mauryas failed to keep up the prestige of the empire at a high level and proved unequal to the task of controlling the forces of disintegration which soon set in. The death of Asoka was, as it were, a signal for such forces to assert themselves and the outlying provinces began to fall away almost within a decade after him.

We have it on the authority of the Rajatarangini that the emperor's own son, Jalauka, set up an independent kingdom in Kashmir. Taranath informs us, evidently following some earlier source, that another successor of Asoka, Virasena, set himself up in Gandhara. These traditions probably preserve true memories of events marking the course of the decline of Magadha under the later Mauryas. In 206 B. C., when Antiochus III arrived in the Kabul Valley from Bactria, he found a certain Sophagasenus ruling there. As suggested by Thomas, it is not improbable that this chief was a successor of Virasena. Inscriptions discovered at Bhattiprolu show that already about 200 B. C. a king named Kuberaka was reigning in the Krishna District of Andhra, perhaps independently of the Mauryas. We have no definite information about South India but the testimony of the Malavikagnimitram appears to suggest that before the final collapse of the Mauryas the frontiers of the empire had receded to Vidarbha in the north. It is held by some that the loss of the south was due to the successful revolt of the Andhra-Satavahanas who soon rose to be a great power there and it is also thought that not long after Asoka Kalinga became independent under the Chedi or Mahameghavahana dynasty. The date of the rise of these families is, however, uncertain and it seems more reasonable to hold that they emerged into the lime-light at a considerably later period.

'And then', the *Yugapurana* section of the *Gargi Samhita* informs us 'the maliciously valiant Yavanas, verrunning Saketa, Panchala and Mathura, will reach Kusumadhwaja (Pataliputra). Pushapura (Pataliputra) being reached.............all the countries will be in disorder'. This allusion to deep inroads of the foreigners, apparently the Greeks of Bactria, occurs immediately after the mention of Salisuka Maurya who probably flourished about 200 B. C., as in some Puranic texts he is represented as third in ascent from Brihadratha and fourth in descent from Asoka. It is, therefore, not improbable that, besides

internal revolts, foreign invasion also played an important role in the dimunition of the power of Magadha under the later Mauryas. Demetrius I of Bactria, who reigned from c. 190 B. C. to c. 165 B. C., was an ambitious ruler whom the classical writers credit with substantial conquests in India. Taking advantage of the increasing weakness of Magadha, he probably launched a great offensive, depriving the Mauryas of a good part of their north-western dominions and harrying even the central and eastern regions by his victorious raid. His success against the later Mauryas must have accelerated the pace of their decline by giving a tremendous blow to their power and prestige and a great fillip to centrifugal tendencies and factious politics. This was, in all probability, the course of events, but unfortunately there is no definite proof of it. Many authorities are inclined to place the advance of the Yananas beyond the Indus into India proper, specially the incursion into the Madhyadesa' *after* the downfall of the Mauryas, in the reign of Pushyamitra or even later. The *Gargi* Samhita, of course, speaks of the great expedition after Salisuka, but its jerky narrative is full of large gaps, and on its basis alone it cannot be said that the events alluded to in it took place immediately after, or even soon after, that prince. If foreign invasion has been a factor in the collapse of several famous ruling families, it is also known to have been sometimes the consequence of the inevitable confusion caused by the overthrow of such families. A vague memory of Greek invasions in the later Maurya period seems to be preserved in the Rajatarangini which informs us that Asoka's son, Jalauka, 'crushed the invading Mlechchha hordes,' but the historical value of the chronicle for these early times is doubtful.

Some knowledge of the circumstances under which the last of the Mauryas perished at the hands of his general may be gleaned from the *Malavikagnimitram* of Kalidasa and the *Harsachharita* of Banabhatta. It would appear from the drama that Brihadratha was a weak and ineffectual ruler who could not check the growth of the power of his high officials and the formation of contending groups among them. During his feeble regime, the atmosphere of the imperial court was surcharged with active intrigue and conspiracy, the unfailing attendants of courtly circles in the stage of decline, and the affairs of the empire were controlled by two

powerful rival factions rather than by himself. One of the parties was headed by a minister of state (*Mauryasachiva*) and the other by the general (*Senapati*) Pushyamitra. Both the leaders probably aimed at replacing the rule of Brihadratha by their own or keeping him under their influence and strove hard to strengthen their base in the official hierarchy of the realm. While the general secured for his son, Agnimitra. the viceroyalty of Vidisa, the minister succeeded in getting his partisan, Yajnasena, appointed to the charge of Vidarbha and the acrimonious division probably affected the other administrative offices also. But the general had the advantage of the minister inasmuch as he controlled the fighting forces of the empire and it was apparently this that gave him the victory in the contest. Having fully seduced the loyalty of the soldiers, he at last put forth the bloody hand, assassinated the emperor and cast the minister into prison. The Harshacharita tells us that it was at a review of the armed forces that the last of the Mauryas was murdered.[3]

That the army and the people aquiesced in the subversion of the Maurya monarchy need not cause us any great surprise. Thr later Mauryas had not maintained the high traditions of their predecessors and could lay no claim to the gratitude or affection of their subjects. They had permitted wide regions to slip out of the Magadhan Empire thus jeopardising the much cherished political unity of the country which the early kings of Magadha had done so much to build. They evidently had not been able to control the factors conducing to misgovernment which were operating even in the time of Asoka and some of them have expressly been accused of 'greatly oppressing' the country.[4] If the Jaina tradition on the point may be believed, one of them adopted the extremely injudicious step of employing even the soldiers as missionaries.[5] The little we know of the lives of the later Mauryas seems to suggest that, like the later Moghuls of Delhi, they were *rois faineants*, caring little for the arduous duties of their office and whiling away their valuable time in the pursuit of idle luxury while scheming officials and commanders gnawed at the vitals of their power, The manner of Brihadratha's death clearly shows that he had lost personal contact with the army whose management, discipline and control seem to have been completely left into the hands of Pushyamitra and the fact that

his officials plied their political game under his very nose indicates that in civil government also he had reversed Asoka's policy of 'attending to business at all hours and times.' As a source of inspiration to the Indian people the devitalised line of the Mauryas was totally ineffectual now and its fall could not be a matter of great concern to them. It is not improbable that the politically conscious element in the country actually longed for a change of regime. Hard times were fast approaching. Even if the Mauryas had not already given proof of their weakness in the fight against the Bactrians, it must have been common knowledge that the latter were making keen preparations to swoop down upon Hindustan and the hope probably lurked in many minds that a new dynasty may be able to provide a better leadership in the impending crisis.

Apart from the evil effects of the Greek invasion, if it really took place at this time, and the inefficiency of the later Maurya emperors, there were other factors at work leading to a steady decline of the empire of Magadha and the prestige of the Maurya House. These have been elucidated at a later place where also the allegation of some that Asoka's pacificism was largely instrumental in ruining the empire has been examined briefly.

According to Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Harprasad Sastri[6] and a few others, the downfall of the Mauryas was mainly due to a reaction promoted by Brahmanas aganist Asoka and his successors. It is argued that the successful *coup d'etat* of Pushyamitra, himself a Brahmana, marks the culmination of a movement set afoot by the Brahmanas against the anti-Brahmanical policy of Asoka and his descendants. Such a view, though not improbable in itself, finds little support in the extant record. It is possible to contend that in spite of the highly tolerant nature of Asoka's religious policy and the general respect he showed to the Brahmanas —the supposition that in one of his edicts the emperor boasts of having 'shown up' the Brahmanas and that he drastically curtailed their legal privileges has been shown above to be ill-founded— the latter were probably not satisfied with him as a class. His adoption of Buddhism as the state religion and the great impetus he gave to it, the ban he imposed on animal sacrifices and the open scorn he showered at the various *mangalas*, could not but alienate the sympathies of many of them. We are here dealing not only with

the fact that the core of orthodoxy was harder in the Brahmanas than in the other classes, but also with the consideration, which may have weighed far more with many, that much of their social eminence depended on their being the repositories of the sacrificial-lore and the animal sacrifices and the minor rites formed the chief source of livelihood in the case of many of them. The repudiation at one stroke of this profitable trade was bound to cause a great resentment and heart-burning among those it affected and an offended ritualist expressed his condemnation of the policy of Asoka in no over-civill anguage when he said, *a propos* of Salisuka, but evidently criticising the Asokan ideal of Dharmavijaya, 'The *fool* will try to establish the victory of Dharma.'[7] The general discontent of the Brahmanas against the 'unorthodox' dynasty of the Mauryas is also reflected in the unsavoury epithet 'asura' applied to them by some priestly authors in the Puranas. With this background in mind when we remember that the overthrower of the Mauryas was a Brahmana and that under him determined efforts seem to have been made to revive the declining prestige of Brahmanism, it certainly becomes tempting to imagine his revolt as the fruition of an organised Brahmana attempt to displace the undesirable Mauryas. *But positive evidence is altogether lacking.* Indeed the very fact of Pushyamitra's appointment to the key-office of the commander-in-chief of the armed forces might suggest that the Brahmanas were not looked upon as a refractory class or agents of a political reaction by the later Mauryas. The testimony of the *Malavikagrimitram*, our principal source of information about the circumstances leading to the change of regime in Magadha, also leaves a strong impression that the overthrow of Brihadratha was in the nature of a mere palace revolution, engineered by an ambitious general who perfected his plans through the usual methods of intrigue and treachery. Even if we suppose that Brahmana reaction was one of the causes of the downfall of the Mauryas, the conclusion that it was the most important of such causes shall still be wanting substantiation.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Basham, The Wonder That Was India, p. 56.
2. This is suggested by the testimony of the Malavikagrimitram.

3. Harshacharita ed. Cowell and Thomas.

4. This charge is brought against Salisuka by the Gargi Samhita.

5. He was Samprati.

6. JASB, 1910, pp. 259 ff.

7. 'Sthapayishyati mohatma vijayam nama dharmikam.' This opprobrious statement occurs in the Brahmanical Gargi Samhita in connection with Salisuka but there can hardly be any doubt that it contains an allusion to the Dharmavijaya policy of Asoka.

CHAPTER IV

General Life in the Maurya Period

A. SOCIAL

Speaking of the conditions obtaining in Maurya India, Megasthenes says: 'No one is allowed to marry out of his own caste, or to exchange one profession or trade for another, or to follow more than one business.' The ambassador's observation provides a good indication of the rigidity and exclusiveness that the caste system had attained by the time of the foundation of the Maurya Empire and lends striking corroboration to the Brahmanical works on the point In the actual enumeration of the castes however, his account differs considerably from that of the latter. According to him the population of India was divided into seven castes, viz., (a) Philosophers, (b) Husbandmen, (c) Herdsmen, (d) Artizans, (e) Soldiery, (f) Overseers or Spies and (g) Councillors and Assessors. This can be reconciled neither with the four-fold division of the great classes nor with the multiplicity of castes and sub-castes functioning in the Indian society of the time, and is useful only as recording the impressions of a foreigner about the social and economic life round about Pataliputra. The probable manner in which the mistake of Megasthenes arose has been set forth in the following words by E. R. Bevan......'he (Megasthenes) may have simply ascertained the fact that the people was divided into functional castes which did not intermarry and then have made his own list of the various occupations as they presented themselves to his eye.'[1]

Had he visited India about fifty years later than he did, Megasthenes would probably have found a change coming over the caste position in the country. The religious propaganda of Asoka in favour of Buddhism was no doubt detrimental to the growth of caste prejudices and tended to strengthen the forces making for social elasticity. The nature of the available sources, however, does not permit us to form an exact estimate of the

extent to which the growth of caste was affected by the king's success in diffusing Buddhism far and wide.

In spite of its obvious shortcoming, the account of Megasthenes gives a good idea of the great diversity and range of Indian life in the Maurya period. The ambassador informs us that the Philosophers were of two types, the Brachmanes (Brahmanas) and the Sarmanes (Sramanas). The latter were further subdivided into the Hylobioi who dwelt in forests and lived on leaves and fruits and the Physicians, highly respected in society on account of their proficiency in the medical art. The Brahmana spent the first thirty-seven years of his life in a simple manner in a grove in front of the city, abstaining from animal food and sexual pleasure and devoting his entire time to acquiring and imparting knowledge. On the completion of this period, he went back to his home in the town, married as many wives as he liked, ate flesh and used fine clothes and ornaments and spent the rest of his days in a luxurious and leisurely fashion. The husbandmen were a timid set who seldom went near a town either on business or 'to take part in its tumults.' The shepherds and hunters made their living by hunting and rearing cattle and selling or letting out on hire various kinds of beasts of burden. The artisans were engaged in the various trades, vended wares and were employed in bodily labour. They also included the ship-builders and armour-makers who worked for the king alone. The soldiers were a knightly; arrogant lot, much given to idleness and drinking when not on active duty. The overseers or spies made reports about 'every thing that goes on' to the king while the councillors and assessors carried on the judicial and executive administration of the realm. Life in the Mauryan age thus flowed into manifold channels and presented a rich variety of modes and aspects.

In Book I, Ch. III, of the Arthasastra, Kautilya describes at length the duties and conditions of the four *asramas* or stages of life. But there is no tangible evidence anywhere that in actual life this theoretical ideal received any more respect in the Maurya period than in the preceding age. It is not without significance that Megasthenes notices only two stages, those of studentship and householder, in the life of the Brahmanas themselves from

whom the other classes were supposed to take their cue in matters of social behaviour.

Though we have very little direct information about the Maurya village which sheltered the greater part of the population, it may be regarded as certain that it was little different from its counterpart of the earlier periods. The drab life of the villages, broken only by public festivals and enthusiastic fits of collective activity, ran its usual humdrum course unencumbered by excessive poverty or great wealth. Quite a few persons, though intimately connected with the economic life of the villages, were compelled by their professions to live in forests or cattle-stations (*ghosha*) beside pastures and rivers. No exact statistics are available, but it may be reasonably held that about five to ten per cent of the people lived in towns of which the country possessed a fair number As already stated, the Greek writers refer to a very large number of towns in the north-west, though it is clear that most of these were only small bazar settlements. The account of Mega sthenes shows that the other parts of the country could also boast of many cities and flourishing townships. The envoy deposes that the towns situated in places likely to suffer from flood or excessive rain were usually built of wood while those in dry places or in mountains were constructed of bricks. While only some of the towns could have been fortified, all of them were furnished with good roads, parks, sanitary arrangements and precautionary devices against fire and other accidental dangers. The most important cities of the land were Pataliputra, Taxila, Ujjayini, Kausambi, Surparaka and Tamralipti. Pataliputra was the pride of the country and we are fortunate in possessing the following description of it quoted by Arrian from Megasthenes :[2]

"The largest city in India, named Palimbothra, is in the land of the Prasians, where is the confluence of the river Erannobaos (= Hiranyavaha or Son) andthe Ganges which is the greatest of rivers. The Erannobaos would be the third of the Indian rivers.........Megasthenes says that on the side where it is longest this city extends 80 *stades* ($9\frac{1}{2}$ miles) in length, and that its breadth is fifteen *stades* ($1\frac{3}{4}$ miles) ; that the city has been surrounded with a ditch in breadth 6 *plethra* (606 feet), and in the depth of

30 cubits ; and that it has 570 towers and 64 gates."

It is not possible to form an accurate idea of the population of this great metropolis, but the dimensions given by Megasthenes may be taken to suggest an approximate figure of about 50,0000 souls. Like the other great capitals of the world, it was also adorned by many notable edifices and public buildings. Far above the other mansions of the city towered the Sugangiya Prasada, the royal residence of the Maurya emperors, adjudged by foreign writers as more imposing than even the palaces of Susa and Ecbatana and proverbial for its grandeur.[3]

Life in the cities was full of bustle. The wealthier towns-men roamed through the streets in chariots, clad in costly muslin and decked with finery and ornaments, sometimes with servants holding umbrellas after them. Hostelries and gambling houses (*dyutagriha*) did a roaring business. The inns specially meant for the accommodation of foreigners must have presented a colourful spectacle with their exotic tenants and their quaint ways and manners. Dramatic halls (*prekshagriha*) attracted large audiences and many an opulent patron threaded his way to the residence of licensed prostitutes. The services of actors (*nata*), dancers, (*nartaka*), musicians (*vadaka)*, magicians (*aindrajalika*) and bards (*suta*) were much in demand and were evidently generously remunerated. Animal bouts and chariot racing were favourite sports of the people who seem to have cared mach for the delights of chase and picnic.[4] It would, however, seem that in many, if not all, cities the gaiety and merry-making were confined to the day-time. Movements of the citizens being restricted during the nights, specially during the third watch, the stillness of the dark hours must have presented a restful contrast to the tumults of the day.

Megasthenes tells us that 'the Indians eat always alone and have no fixed hours when meals are to be taken by all in common but each one eats when he feels inclined' and judiciously adds that 'the contrary custom would be better for the ends of social life.' An interesting description of an Indian dinner by him has reached down to us. 'A table like a tripod is set before each person. There is placed upon it a golden bowl into which they first put rice boiled as one would boil barley and then they add many

dainties prepared according to Indian fashion.' Megasthenes is obviously describing here a state banquet or one of the many grand dinners in the houses of the wealthy persons of the capital to which he must have been invited in deference to his status as ambassador. The meals of the common people certainly involved no 'golden bowls' and very few 'dainties.' In the average households only cheap metal and earth-ware utensils were to be had and in the villages more coarse grain than rice was eaten. Meat was a popular article of diet and the state exercised a strict supervision over the slaughter houses (*suna*) in the towns. Megasthenes requires us to believe that the Indians did not drink wine except at sacrifices but he was certainly misinformed on this point. The testimony of the Arthasastra leaves no doubt that wine-drinking was very popular and quite a few liqour shops existed in the towns and the country-side, retailing various species of drink to regular customers.

Ladies of the upper classes suffered due to the prevalence of polygamous marriage testified to by both Megasthenes and Kautilya. But, in general, women enjoyed a respectable place in the joint households, possessing the right of claiming redress from the law-courts in the event of maltreatment by their husbands. *Purdah* was rare and *sati* must have been known only as a strange and barbarous custom of the north-west. Megasthenes says that slavery was unknown in India. 'All the Indians are free and not one of them is a slave......The Indians do not use even aliens as slaves much less a countryman of their own.' He was wrong; slavery was a well established institution in the country. Slaves are mentioned by Kautilya and the word *dasa* is of not infrequent occurrence in the Asokan edicts. It was probably the liberal treatment meted out to the slaves and their small number that led to the mistaken belief of the envoy. The system of slavery current in India presented a strong contrast to the barbarous institution which he had known in the West.[7]

A large percentage of the people, perhaps larger than at any other epoch of Indian history, were literate. The edicts of Asoka were meant to be read by the common men; there must have been many who could read and write in the various parts of the empire over which the edicts are distributed. Takshasila in the north-

west and Varanasi and Pataliputra in the east were great centres of education, and, on a smaller scale, the numerous Buddhist *viharas* also undertook the task of diffusing literacy and education. Educational institutions got liberal grants from the state exchequer.

The social morality of the Indians was of a high order and produced a very favourable impression on the minds of foreign observers. We have it on the authority of Megasthenes that they seldom went to law, had no suits about pledges or deposits and confided in each other without requiring either seals or witnesses. The incidence of crime was apparently low and it is recorded that the people did not hesitate to leave their houses unguarded in their absence.[8]

B. ECONOMIC

The unification of the entire country under one sceptre and the consequent abolition of internal barriers naturally had important repercussions in the economic field. The linking-up of the Indus basin and trans-Vindhyan India with the fertile valley of the Ganges opened up fresh avenues of trade and commerce. There is no evidence of any extensive trade existing between Northern and Southern India in the pre-Mauryan period but the condition was materially altered during the regime of the Maurya emperors. The *Dakshinapatha* or the 'Southern Road' now rose into importance as one of the principal arteries of commerce in the country. Northern traders dealing in horses, aromatic materials, drugs and the like, did splendid business in the South and brought back shell, mother-of-pearl, diamond, sapphire, gold, and cotton in large quantities. The *Uttarapatha* (Indus basin) also came into more intimate contact with the rest of the country than before and India became one economically as it had become one politically.

The Mauryan Empire was in direct relation with the Seleucid territory of Persia and Western Asia and carried on a brisk commerce with it, partly through the land-routes and partly over the sea. Indian merchandise now found its way into the markets of Egypt also *via* the sea-route which stretched along the eastern coast of the Red Sea and was dominated by the port of Hormuz and it is stated that in the processions of Ptolemy II Philadelphus of

Egypt, a contemporary of Asoka, were to be found not only Indian hunting dogs and Indian elephants but also Indian spices carried on camels. The legend about the foundation of the kingdom of Khotan, already referred to[9], shows that there was a constant cultural and commercial intercourse between India, specially the north-west, and Chinese Turkistan during the Mauryan epoch and it is not improbable that Khotan was one of the termini of the great Haimavata Road, 'the road leading to the snowy countries', mentioned by Kautilya as giving access to more profitable merchandise such as elephants, horses, *gandha-kasturi*, ivory, skins, silver and gold. The reference to the cloth produced in the land called 'China' in the Arthasastra suggests commercial relations with China, or some place in the north-western part of it, and there is reason to believe that the trade with Suvarnabhumi (Burma, Malay Peninsula and the Malay Archipelago) was further developed during this period.

The increased volume of external and internal trade enjoined upon the Mauryas the task of developing the means of communication and establishing new market-towns and trading stations. That the state was not unmindful of this important duty is amply testified to by the Arthasastra and the notices of the Greek writers. Like the Achaemenians, whom they emulated in many other respects, the Mauryas paid full heed to this aspect of government and their Public Works Department devoted a substantial part of its budget to it. Kautilya refers to many classes of roads and paths such as *samyaniyapatha* (road leading to market town), *chakrapatha* (road meant for vehicular traffic) and *durgapatha* (road leading to a fort),[10] and, as noted above, one of the main duties of the *agronomi* (district officials), according to Megasthenes, was 'to superintendent the public roads and place a pillar at every ten stadia to indicate the by-ways and distances.' For the security of foreign trade the numerous port-towns (*panyapattana*) and the territorial waters were kept free of the menace of pirate-boats (*himsrika*) by the *Navadhyaksha* or Superintendent of the Admiralty who also provided landing and embarking facilities to the incoming and outgoing ships.

While giving every encouragement to trade and commerce, the state adopted a policy of rigorous control and implemented it

by an elaborate system of checks and regulations. The attempt to harmonise economic life with the new imperial set-up led to many restrictions being imposed on the tradespeople of the land and a considerable limitation of their freedom. In strong contrast with the earlier periods, no one could now engage in a trade or profession without a licence for which a substantial fee seems to have been exacted. The retail prices of goods were not a matter of individual discretion but were fixed by the *Panyadhyaksha* (Superintendent of Markets) and only a limited scale of profits was allowed on the sales—5% on goods of indigenous manufacture and 10% on imported merchandise. Weights and measures were periodically inspected, 'smuggling and adulteration of goods was severely punished and speculation and cornering to influence prices was not permitted.' Goods could be sold only in the open market, transactions in the place of origin (*jatibhumi*) being punishable by fine. The control of trade by the state attracted the attention of Megasthenes also whose information on the subject has already been set forth elsewhere.[11] While trade was subjected to a number of taxes and cesses (*e. g.* tax on the frontier, road cess, tolls and octrois at the gates of cities), the state itself held the monopholy of some of the most lucrative trades and industries such as mines and salt centres. 'Indian economy thus parted company with Adam Smith and Tugot and fell in line with the rigorous totalitarianism of Friederisch List.'

In the sphere of industry, the process of localisation had made considerable progress and there were now many famous centres of specialised crafts in the country. For example, the best linen came from Kasi and Pundravardhana, the best silk from Vanga, Pundravardhana and Assam, and the finest type of cotton cloth from Mudura, Kalinga, Kasi etc.[12] Metal working, wood-working, stone-cutting, jewellery and similar other crafts do not seem to have been the specialities of any particular regions but the Indian craftsmen had acquired a high degree of skill in these also and their work evoked unstinted praise from the contemporary Greek observers. The industries connected with wine, salt, armament, ship-building, oil-fields, mining and coinage were monopolised by the state whose industrial projects were run by such special officers as the *Lavanadhyaksha* (Superintendent of Salt), *Khanyadhya-*

ksha (Superintendent of Mines), *Lakshanadhyaksha* (Superintendent of Mints) and *Suradhyaksha* (Superintendent of Wine).

The organisation of trade and industry into *Sanghas* (corporations) and *Srenis* (guilds) now reflected a more advanced stage of development than in the previous epoch. 'Kautilya refers to *Srenis*, organised under *Mukhyas*, which were thought to be sufficiently important for their customs to be recorded in official registers and were otherwise a factor to be reckoned with the working of the state administration.' The more important *Srenis* probably possessed the right of employing their own private troops which provided a good source of recruitment for the army in times of need. In conformity with the general policy of administration the government exercised a vigilant control over the guilds and not infrequently interfered in their working and transactions. The supreme authority in matters relating to the guilds was probably vested in a board of three *Amatyas* (high officers) or *Pradeshtris*.

The general level of prosperity in the cities was fairly high due to the growth of industry and trade and the emergence of an extensive civil service. The small middle class of the earlier period had now swelled to considerable dimensions and had become an important factor in the economic life of the country. The city population included a lage percentage of labourers, workmen and establishment hands also, who ranked socially and economically inferior to the well-to-do burghers but still earned enough to meet their modest requirements.

The basic occupation of agriculture received due encouragement from the state. According to Megasthenes, the cultivators, who lived in the country and avoided the towns as much as possible, were exempt from fighting and other compulsory services. 'In times of civil war, the soldiers are not allowed to destroy their crops or ravage their lands; hence while the former are fighting and killing each other as they can, the latter may be seen close at hand tranquilly pursuing their work, perhaps ploughing or gathering in the crops, pruning the trees or reaping the harvests.' The state took all possible steps to safeguard and further the interests of the agriculturists. A special allowance was paid to the shepherds and hunters, for 'clearing the land of wild beasts and birds that devour the seed and other pests' and hunting-hounds (*svaganinah*) were maintained

to protect the pastures from wild animals. Proper care was devoted to the maintenance and improvement of irrigational facilities which v ere an important source of revenue to the state. According to Strabo, probably quoting Megasthenes, there were numerous closed reservoirs in the country from which water was distributed by canals 'so that all may have an equal use of it.' For many centuries the great dam of the Sudarsana Lake in Kathiawar stood a grand monument to the anxious concern of the Maurya emperors for the welfare of the agricultural population of the country. Precautionary measures of which the nature is not known. were adopted against the devastations of locusts, fire, flood and other natural calamities and remissions of revenue as also free distribution of seed from government stores were frequently ordered in case of distress. To adjust the pressure on land, projects of colonisations were also sometimes undertaken.

The fertility of the soil enabled the people to reap two good crops in the year and lead a moderately happy and contended life. Megasthenes gathered the impression that famine and scarcity were unknown in India and, according to him, the general prosperity of the people was reflected in their 'proud bearing and superior stature.' The envoy is probably speaking of the townsmen but, in a general way, his observations may be regarded as true of the villages also. The pressure on land had probably increased slightly and already there was a class of landless labourers (*vishti*) in the countryside. But the Indian villages were still far from being the seats of the abject poverty and squalor which characterize them today.

C. ART AND LITERATURE

The history of art in India suffers from a long hiatus of about 1200 years between the end of the Indus Valley civilisation and the foundation of the Maurya empire in the fourth century B. C. The Aryans who gave the death-blow to the arleady decaying culture of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro possessed no artistic traditions worth the name and are saved from the charge of aesthetic morbidity only by the beauty and rhythm of some of the Vedic hymns. The material remains of whatever meagre artistic activity there was in India after the disapperance of the Indus cities and before the rise of the Mauryas have perished almost wholly. Workers in wood, ivory, clay and metal no doubt plied their respective trades and

in the early Buddhist literature and the epics there are references to painted halls and portrait galleries. But no tangible examples of this early Indian art, which is unlikely to have been of a very high order, have survived, except in the form of the ruins of cities excavated in many parts of the country, remains of the Northern Black Polished ware which was extensively used in North India before the Mauryas and a few stray articles recovered here and there. It is only with the advent of the Mauryan epoch that we find ourselves on firm ground in respect of the history of art in India. The patronage of the Maurya kings and the general material prosperity of the period stimulated the feeble aesthetic spirit of the country and led to the production of objects of art which have endured to this day.

The earliest information about the artistic achievement of the Maurya period is supplied by the following obsevation of Alien regarding the palace of Chandragupta (the Sugangiya Palace) at Pataliputra : 'In the royal palace where the greatest of all the kings of the country resides, besides much else which is calculated to excite admiration, and with which neither Susa, nor Ekbatana can vie (for, methinks, only the well-known vanity of the Persians could prompt such a comparison) there are other wonders besides.' The magnificient place of the Maurya emperors stood close to the modern village of Kumrahara near Patna and its ruins, including a pillared hall, have been unearthed by Dr. Spooner. The remains of the hall show strong Achaemenian influence and reminded the learned excavator of the Hall of Hundred Columns built at Persepolis by Darius. 'Whereas no other structure of really early date in ancient India disclosed an arrangement of pillars in square bays over the whole floor the hall at Kumrahara did show this other wise unparalleled arrangement and and this was identical with the arrangement of the pillars in the Achaemenian hall. The columns themselves moreover showed a technique in their polished surface which is not only known to have been un-Indian and outside the line of Indian architectural development, but which again is identical with Persepolitan workmanship.'[13] Endowed with many such remarkable features, the palace withstood the ravages of time for many centuries and was still standing when Fa-hien visited Pataliputra at the beginning of the 4th century, A. D. Its elegance and noble proportions made a deep impression on the pilgrim who has recorded his appreciation

in the following rapturous words: 'The royal palace and halls in the midst of the city, which exist now as of old, were all made by spirits which he (i. e., the emperor Asoka) employed, and which piled up the stones, reared the walls and gates, and executed the elegant carving and inlaid sculpture work in a way which no human hands of this world could accomplish.'

The remark of Fahien suggests that Asoka made extensive additions to, and innovations in, the ancestral palace inherited by him. It is, therefore difficult to say if the pillared hall referred to above existed before him be or was constructed at his own command. But it is certain that with his accession Persian influence began to be more strongly felt in India than before. The emperor adopted directly from Persia the practice of engraving inscriptions on stone. It was pointed out long ago by Senart that the preamble of his edicts—'Thus saith Priyadarsi the king, dear unto gods'—which is unique in the entire range of Indian epigraphs is only a modified rendering of the phrase 'Thus saith the King Darius' or 'Thus saith the king Xexes' occurring in the Achaemenian records. Moreover, in both the Achaemenian and Asokan inscriptions, this phrase in the third person is immediately followed by the use of the first person ; and in some versions of the Asokan edicts we find Persian forms like *dipi* and *nipista* employed in place of their Indian equivalents. There can, as such, be no doubt whatever that it was under inspiration drawn from Persia that Asoka began to incise edicts on stone and that the assertion of some that the preamble of his epigraphs may be an adapted form of similar or near-similar Upanishadic phrases is not well-founded.[14]

A whole set of Asoka's inscriptions is engraved on huge stone columns in which the Achaemenian influence is even more clearly visible. These celebrated pillars constitute a brilliant, though short-lived, interlude in the development of the Indian artistic tradition and have received the highest praise from all competent critics. The number of columns carved and erected at the order of Asoka is not exactly determinable, but it was certainly above thirty. All of them were quarried out of the grey sandstone of Chunar (Mirzapore district, U. P.) and are characterized by a remarkable polish which has not yielded its secret even to modern investigation. It would appear that at Chunar there existed a great centre of stone sculpture,

patronised by the Maurya emperors, and the columns were transferred from it to the differant localities by boat or specially constructed vehicles. The conveyance and setting up of these gigantic stone pieces, some of them weighing as much as fifty tons, indicate a remarkable degree of engineering skill which does not fall far short of that of the pyramid builders of Egypt. The columns consist of two parts each, viz., (a) the shaft and (b) the capital. The shafts, unfluted and unornamented, are made up of one piece of stone, tapering gently from the base to the top and rising to a height of between thirty to forty feet. The capital or the upper part of the columns is a seperate piece joined to the shaft by means of a copper bolt of which an actual speciman has been found. The transition from the shaft to the capital is mostly alrupt but, in some cases, is softened by the introduction of one or more intermediate mouldings. The capital itself is divided into three principal members. The lowermost of these is a graceful 'bell' which, inspite of some differences of detail, cannot fail to remind one of the similar feature forming the base of the Achaemenian columns. It is chiefly on account of this that the capital is often described as 'Persepolitan.' Above the 'bell' is a round or square abacus (tablet) on which are carved figures of bull, lion, elephant, horse, pecking geese or honeysukcle creepers. The topmost member of the capital is the figure of an animal in the round—again, bull, lion, elephant or horse. The finest specimen of the capital is that of the Sarnath pillar of which the following account is given by Sir John Morshall: "The capital measures seven feet in height......it is surmounted by four magnificient lions standing back to back, and in their middle was a large stone wheel, the sacred Dharmachakra symbol. ...... It apparently had 32 spokes while the four smaller wheels below the lions have only 24 spokes. The lions stand on a drum with four animal figures carved upon it, viz., a lion, an elephant, a bull and a horse placed between four wheels. The upper part of the capital is supported by an elegant bell-shaped member. The lions and the other animals are wonderfully life-like and the carving of every detail is perfect."[15]

The total effect of the Asokan columns as pieces of art is extremely pleasing. Tall and graceful in the likeness of palm-trees, they speak an aesthetic language which is heard nowhere else in the domain of ancient art. The marvellous polish and the 'bell-capitals' characterizing them leave no doubt that, as in the case of

the edicts, the inspiration for them also came from Achaemenian Persia. The accurate realism and the vigorous modelling of the animal figures at the top which mark them as superb examples of sculptural art and which have led a high authority to describe them as 'the finest carving, indeed, that India has yet produced, and unsurpassed by anything of their kind in the ancient world',[16] strongly suggest the impact of Hellenistic workmanship which is also borne out by the occurrence of the honeysuckle, the cable and the bead and reel ornaments in the capitals. But the Asokan column was by no means an inert, formal copy of a Perso-Hellenistic prototype. We have here a clear case of the transmutation of foreign influence by the genius of India. It has been pointed out that the Mauryan columns differ in many essential details from the Persian pillars of the Achaemenian period. The conception of the *free-standing column*, not forming part of any building or structure, is wholly Indian. The Persian columns were, in the mature stage of their development, fluted, while the shafts of the Asokan pillars are quite smooth ; the Persian pillars were made up of blocks of stones while the Asokan examples are monolithic ; the 'bell' in Persia formed the base of the columns but in India it rests at the top of the shafts; the Persian pillars were supported by a platform while their Asokan counterparts emerge out of the ground without any supporting features or props. The animal figures may have been modelled on Hellenistic lines but the bull of Rampurwa bears a strange likeness to the seal-engravings of the Indus Valley. In absorbing the Perso-Hellenistic influence Indian craftsmen thus adapted and transformed it. The fact that there had been nothing akin to the Asokan columns in India before this and that they show no trace of the technical hesitation characteristic of novices but were evidently done by master artists, has given rise in some quarters to the belief that foreign craftsmen, imported from Persia and friendly Hellenistic countries, had a large hand in the chiselling and modelling connected with them. But the marked divergence from the Persian and Hellenistic models visible in the columns falsifies such an assumption. The columns are almost certainly the work of native artists who had studied the artistic idiom of Persia and the Hellenistic world and could practise it to advantage. The ability of the Indian craftsmen to quickly master unfamiliar techniques impressed the Greek observers. Nearchus tells us that they began to make Greek articles such as scrapers and oil flakes

used by athletes as soon as these were first brought to India by the Greek soldiers.

Asoka, then, created a unique body of official art which was certainly inspired by foreign models but was still far from being a slavish imitation of the latter. The emperor encouraged the native tradition also and some forms of purely Indian art received considerable vogue through his patronage. The *stupa* architecture of India found a great champion in him and was diffused far and wide through his efforts. It has been already noted that he built numerous *stupas* in the different parts of the country, the traditional number being given as 84000. It is generally believed that the original cores of the great *stupas* at Sanchi, Bharhut, Sarnath and possibly of the Dharmarajika *stupa* at Taxila were built by him.[17]

Asoka probably started a new fashion in the architectural and sculptural history of India by undertaking the construction of rock-cut caves. In all three cave-dwellings excavated at his order are known so far, all of them in the Barabar Hill near Gaya. The earliest of these, now called Sudama, was donated to Ajivika monks in the 12th year after the coronation, and 'consists of two chambers: a rectangular ante-chamber with barrel-vaulted roof and a doorway with sloping jams—an indication of adoption of wooden prototypes—in the long side of the chamber at the end of which there is a separate circular cell with a hemispherically domed roof.'[18] The Karna Chaupara cave, excavated in the 19th year, is 'a simple rectangular hall with an arched roof.' The only notable feature of these caves is the remarkable polish of the interior walls but historically they are regarded as extremely important as they stand at the beginning of the long process of artistic evolution which culminated in the great halls of Ajanta, Kanheri and Karle. King Dasaratha, a grandson of Asoka, also dedicated a set of three caves to Ajivika monks in the Nagarjuni Hill which are likewise undistinguished by any noteworthy features. But the cave known as Lomasha Rishi, generally assigned to the Maurya period though it bears no inscription to indicate its exact date, displays a certain amount of elaboration in the facade, thus foreshadowing the development which is a principal source of the aesthetic charm of rock-architecture in India.

The extensive artistic activity of the Maurya court must have found its echo in popular life. The unofficial folk art of the country doubtless felt the galvanising impact of the time, but, strangely enough, no undoubted examples of it are known. Certain pieces of stone sculpture, e. g., the Parkham and Patna Yakshas and the Didarganj Yakshini, are sometimes assigned to the Maurya period as they are fashioned out of the Chunar sandstone and bear the so-called Mauryan polish. Crude and uncouth in the comparison of the well-finished animal figures of the columns, they obviously represent an aesthetic consciousness different from, and less developed than, the one reflected in the official art. It is contended that they may be taken as examples of the popular art of the period. But the date of these pieces is uncertain and their Mauryan context is rejected by some competent critics.[19]

The literary record of the Maurya Empire is, strange to say, quite meagre. Tradition ascribes the authorship of the *Kathavatthu*, a well known text of the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*, to Moggaliputta Tissa, the mentor of Asoka, and of the Jaina *Kalpasutra* to Bhadrabahu, the spiritual guide of Chandragupta. An outstanding literary achievement of the time was the composition of his *Arthasastra* by Chandragupta's famous counsellor, Kautilya or Vishnugupta. Doubts have been raised about this celebrated treatise on polity and statecraft being a genuine Mauryan work by some authorities who assign it to a later date ranging to the second or third century A.D. But among the various arguments adduced in support of this, none appears strong enough to take away the force of the persistent Indian tradition connecting the name of the great Mauryan statesman with the work.[20]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. 'The edicts mention all the four divisions, viz., Brahmanas, soldiers and their chiefs (bhatamaya), corresponding to Kshatriyas, Ibhyas or Vaisyas (R. E. V.), and slaves and servants (dasabhataka) i. e., Sudras; (Tripathi, History of Ancient India, p. 174).
2. CHI, I, pp. 367-8 (Indian Reprint)
3. Quoted by Arrian in Ch. X of his Indica.
4. McCrindle, Ancient India as described in Classical Literature, pp. 141-42. The Sugangiya Palace is referred to in the Mudrarakshasa and also probably in the Hathigumpha Inscription of Kharavela.

5. Gatherings involving combats of animals and birds seem to have been suppressed by Asoka but there is nothing to show that the ban on them continued under his successors also.

6. The distilleries and the wine-shops were controlled by the officer called Suradhyaksha.

7. Supra.

8. During the period of Megasthenes' stay, the thefts reported in the whole army of Chandragupta amounted to the value of less than 200 drachmae.

9. It is argued by some that the name China is derived from that of the first Tsin dynasty (221-209 B. C.) which came to power long after the termination of Chandragupta's reign in India. But as pointed out by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, it is not impossible that it was at first applied to some part of North-West China and was later extended to the whole country. (AIU, p. 614).

10. Kautilya also mentions Rajamaraga, Vivitapatha, Dronamukhapatha, Vyuhapatha and some others.

11. Above, p. 211.

12. It appears from the Arthasastra that Nepal was famous for blankets, certain Himalayan countries for skins, Kamarupa or Assam for fragrant woods, Simhala or Ceylon for gems, and so forth.

13. Spooner.

14. Hultzsch, CII, I, pp. XXXIV—XXXV.

15. Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv., 1904-5, p. 69.

16. Marshall, Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1090-5, p. 36.

17. The stupas were solid hemispherical mounds or domes of brick or masonry constructed to enshrine the relics of eminent personages, specially saints and religious leaders.

18. Age of the Nandas and Mauryas, p. 385.

19. Ibid., pp. 378-384.

20. A good amount of literature has developed round the question of the date and authorship of the Arthasastra. A discussion of the problem is outside the scope of this work. See Dikshitar in Mauryan Polity, pp. 6-27, K. A. N. Sastri in Age of the Nandas and Mauryas, pp. 190-201, and the references cited therein.

CHAPTER V

Religion

A. GROWTH OF NON-BRAHMANICAL RELIGIONS

Though following the traditional Indian policy of religious toleration, many of the Maurya emperors had a personal predilection for non-Brahmanical creeds. The founder of the dynasty is commonly thought to have become a Jaina in his last years and Samprati, one of its later members, is acclaimed as an enthusiastic supporter of Jainism. Buddhism found a great patron in Asoka and a reference in the Gargi Samhita seems to suggest that the example of that emperor was followed by his descendant Salisuka. Another member of the family, Dasaratha, is known to have made a gift of cave-residences to Ajivika monks. The direct and indirect patronage of these rulers gave a fillip to the growth of heterodox creeds and the religious picture in the country was changed considerably before the imperial house of the Mauryas was overthrown by the revolution of 184 B. C.

Ten years after the coronation, Asoka announced his conversion to Buddhism and the faith of the Sakyamuni embarked on its career of triumph. The celebrated Maurya was much too enlightened to undertake any aggressive programme of propaganda or conversion on behalf of Buddhism, but in a mild, reasonable manner he made every effort to diffuse the word of his Master far and wide and geared up the entire machinery of the state to that purpose. The official measures adopted by his government for popularising the Dhamma have been enumerated earlier.[1] In other ways also he rendered substantial service to the cause of Buddhism. The very fact that the religion now claimed the allegiance of the Emperor of India could not but have a salutary effect on its status and position in the country. The frequent visits paid by Asoka to its holy places heightened their importance and brought them into the limelight. The numerous *viharas* and *stupas* built by him throughout the length and breadth of the empire were instrumental in attracting notice to the faith and the linguistic cast of his inscriptions must have served to populairse the

language of the Buddhist scriptures. Above all, he took steps to stamp out the evil of schism which was threatening the solidarity of the Buddhist Order and had impeded the growth of the True Religion for over two centuries now. In the seventeenth year of his reign, 236 years after the Buddha's death, the third general council of Buddhism met at Pataliputra, under the presidentship of his preceptor Moggaliputta Tissa, to resolve the differences between the various sects of monks. Though the Buddhist works containing notices of this great synod give only garbled versions of it, it seems impossible to question its historical character as has been done by some writers.[2] The well-known edict of Asoka engraved on the stone slab found at Bhabru evidently embodies an address delivered by him before a congregation of monks and it has been argued with considerable plausibility that the formal occasion for this may have been the session of the third council. The southern sources require us to believe that, as a preparatory step to the convention, Moggaliputta Tissa declared the Vibhajjavadins to be the only true followers of the Buddha and expelled the others from the Sangha. It is hardly credible that a tolerant monarch like Asoka who held that 'all of them (religious sects) desire restraint and purity of thought' and wished that 'everywhere all sects should live in peace'[3] would agree to such wholesale expulsions on grounds of doctrinal differences alone. Several writers are therefore inclined to think that he had probably nothing to do with the council which was a purely sectarian one meant for the Theravadins. But in view of the Bhabru Edict and the association of Moggaliputta Tissa with the assembly, it seems difficult to uphold this conclusion. The reality of the matter appears to be that while the prevailing opinion at the Patna Council was in favour of the Vibhajjavadins, strict disciplinary measures were adopted only against those monks whose factious wranglings were threatening the unity of the monastic organisation. It is not improbable that the royal edict, incised on separate stone pillars found at Sanchi, Sarnath and Kausambi, was issued to give effect to the decision of the council in this respect. 'If a monk or nun' runs the by no means uncertain language of the order, directing the *mahamatras* or civil authorities to keep watch over the conduct of the clergymen, 'tries to disrupt the Sangha, he (or she) should be clad in white clothes and made to live in non-residence', i.e., should

be deprived of the status of monk and turned out of the *viharas*. The strong step thus taken by Asoka seems to have removed, to a large extent, the shadow of disruption hanging low over the Church and strengthened is internal cohesion. The king is probably not guilty of great exaggeration when we find him exclaiming at the end of the edict: 'The Sangha—both of monks and nuns—has been made one and shall remain so . . ."[4]

The weakening of obstructionist elements and internal acrimony through the efforts of Asoka enabled the Sangha to turn its full attention to the task of spreading the faith. There was a great outburst of proselytising energy and the monks took up an ambitious programme of propaganda. Pious and learned *bhikkhus* were despatched to different regions for disseminating the Buddha's message and are said to have acquired notable success. An account of this remarkable missionary activity, inspired indirectly by Asoka, is to be found in the Ceylonese Chronicles. The following are the names of the missionaries along with those of the countries they were sent to by President Moggaliputta Tissa on the completion of the third council, as given in the texts:

1.	Majjhantika	Kasmira and Gandhara.
2.	Mahadeva	Mahishamandala (Mysore)
3.	Rakkhita	Vanavasi (North Kanara)
4.	Yona Dhammara-kkhita.	Aparantaka (Bombay Coast)
5.	Mahadhammara-kkhita.	Maharattha (Maharashtra)
6.	Maharakkhita	Yona (Greek settlements of N. W. India and Kabul Valley)
7.	Majjhima	Himalayan region
8.	Sona and Uttra	Suvannabhumi (perhaps Lower Burma)
9.	Mahendra (a son of Asoka) and four others subsequently followed by the	

emperor's daughter, ... Sanghamitra.	Lanka (Ceylon)

The exact implication of the expression 'Himalayan region' is not known but some have taken it to signify the hilly country of Nepal bordering on the Himalayas. According to the Dipavasma, the party of the teachers despatched to the Himalayan region included the *theras* Majjhima, Kassapagotta, Dundubhisara, Sahadeva and Mulakadeva. The names of the first three of these occur in inscriptions on relic caskets unearthed at Sanchi and its neighbourhood and Kassapagotta is expressly described in these as *Sava-Hemavata-achariya*, 'teacher of the entire Himalayan country.' This fortunate discovery clearly shows that the details furnished by the Chronicles are not purely imaginary but are drawn from genuine traditions current in the island in the early times.

Putting together the testimony of the edicts and the Chronicles, we may conclude that in Asoka's time efforts were made to establish and popularise Buddhism in India, Ceylon, Afghanistan, Western Asia, Northern Africa and South-Eastern Europe and possibly in Burma and Nepal. The evidence in hand enables us to say that the work of the missionaries was rewarded with phenomenal success in India. The high position of Budhhism in the country in the period following the middle of the third century B. C. is clearly attested by ample monumental and epigraphic evidence. 'Of all the religious remains of between 200 B. C. and A. D. 200 so far discovered in India, those of Buddhism far outnumber those of Brahmanism, Hinduism and Jainism put together'. The story of the conversion of Ceylon is told in the Ceylonese Chronicles with 'epic fulness', and there seems little reason to doubt its substantial truth. The creed was welcomed in the island by the contemporary king, Tissa, and soon outstripped the older religion or religions of the land.

The story of the spread of Buddhism to Burma in the reign of Asoka was doubted by V. Smith and Kern mainly on the ground of the lack of independent evidence of Hinayana Buddhism, the creed of Asoka's day, having ever been prevalent there in the early period. The earliest form of Buddhism known in Burma, according to these scholars, was Mahayana which must have travelled to the country from India along the coast of the Bay of Bengal at a later date. Recent excavations, however, have yielded proof of the currency of Theravada or Pali Buddhism (Hinayana) in some parts of Burma as early as c. 500 A. D. and the possibility of truth in the tradition about the mission of Sona and Uttara should no longer be ruled out though independent early corroboration is still not forthcoming and archaeological material does not furnish evidence of wide popularity of Buddhism, indeed of any considerable headway made by Indian cultural influence itself, in Burma or the other parts of South-East Asia until a considerably later period.

Prof. Rhys Davids is inclined to dismiss the claim of the successful propagation of Dhamma in the Greek states of Western Asia, South-Eastern Europe and Northern Africa as 'mere royal rodomontade.' "We can well imagine" says, he, 'the amusement of the Greeks at the idea of a 'barbarian' teaching them their duty but we can hardly imagine them discarding their gods and their superstitions at the bidding of an alien king." It is, however, extremely difficult to believe that Asoka made the claim without a factual basis, however slight it might have been. In the Greek countries named in the edict there was a large non-Greek population which was more amenable to external ideas than the Greeks. Moreover, the Greek mind itself does not appear to have been as completely sealed to cultural influence from outside as the learned professor supposes. Dr. Bhandarkar has drawn our attention to the observation of Epiphanus that the librarian of Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt (a contemporary of Asoka) was eager to have the books of the Hindus translated. That Indian, specially Buddhist, influence did penetrate to parts of Western Asia and Africa in the pre-Christian era is clear from what we know about the precepts and practices of the ancient religious sects of the Essenes (who lived on the Dead Sea) and the Theraputae who lived near Alexandria. These are said to display a distinct imprint of Buddhism and the name Theraputae is itself obviously only a variant of the Indian Buddhist word *Sthaviraputra* or *Sthaviravadin* (i.e., an adherent of the Theravada school of Buddhism). It has also been argued, though others deny it emphatically, that certain features of early Christianity must have developed in an atmosphere which had imbibed some Buddhist influences. Under such circumstances it can hardly be regarded as improbable that the teaching of Asoka succeeded in reaching the mind and heart of some people, both Greek and non-Greek, in the West and drew their attention to the religion of the Buddha. It may, however, be conceded at once that the missionaries could not have produced any great convulsion in the western countries. A serious upheaval in the Greek world in the third century B. C. was not likely to be overlooked by the classical sources which are silent on the point. Asoka's own edicts are our only source of information about his western missions.

The reign of Asoka thus witnessed a sudden transformation of the status of Buddhism from a more or less local creed confined to the Ganges and Narmada valleys into a world religion with followings

in three continents. The great missionary activity which made this possible was partly state-sponsored and partly the private endeavour of the Buddhist Sangha which was roused to unusual enthusiasm by the impact of Asoka's personality. The combined effort of Asoka and the Order instilled a new life and vitality in the creed which enabled it not only to take deep roots in India and Ceylon, but also eventually to spread to Central Asia, China, Tibet, Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Siam, Cambodia and Indonesia in many of which it is still a living faith It is, therefore, not without justification that the emperor is hailed everywhere in Buddhist literature and legend as a great patron and benefactor of the True Faith. In the annals of Buddhism he occupies a place second only to that of the Founder himself.

While Buddhism was effecting new conquests inside and outside India, the Jaina churchmen were also active in the service of their religion, making zealous efforts to consolidate and strengthen its position. The period about 300 B. C. seems to have been one of great activity which had important repercussions on the subsequent history of the Jinist Order.

In the first place, a section of the community, headed by the patriarch Bhadrabahu and possibly accompanied by the emperor Chandragupta as a monk, left North India and proceeded from Magadha or Malwa to the south where it settled down in Mysore with Sravana Belagola as its chief centre. As indicated elsewhere,[12] the story of this migration of the monks is told in some Jaina works and is confirmed by inscriptions occurring at Sravana Belagola and other places in the south. We may not accept as historical that part of it which ascribes the exodus to the condition, or apprehension, of scarcity caused by a long famine in the north, but there is little reason to doubt the truth of the migration itself. The core of truth in the story seems to be that about the beginning of the third century B.C., a number of enthusiastic Jaina brethren undertook the task of disseminating their religion in the south and for that purpose proceeded beyond the Vindhyas under the energetic leadership of Bhadrabahu. The foundation of the Jaina centre at Sravana Belagola was the beginning of Jainism in South India where it seems to have made considerable progress within a short time. In the Maurya period, Jainism acquired the status of an all-India religion though, unlike Buddhism, it never spread beyond the geographical frontiers of the country.

While the followers of Bhadrabahu were in the south, important developments were taking place in the north. The northern monks, who had been left behind under the charge of Sthulabhadra, convoked a council at Pataliputra to prepare a redaction of the teachings of Mahavira. It is said that these teachings were originally collected in the 14 *Purvas* (i.e., old texts) which were known fully to Bhadabahu and Sthulabhadra only. The latter had been forbidden by the former to teach the last four *Purvas* to his disciples or successors and so these were lost for ever. The main achievement of the assembly of Pataliputra was the arrangement of the first ten *Purvas* in the form of 12 *Angas* or 'limbs of the canon'. A definite core of scriptural literature was thus composed which has endured substantially upto the present day. 'The present scripture of the Jainas is merely a re-arrangement of the first 11 *Angas* made in Valabhi in the fifth century A. D., the 12th Anga having been lost by that time.'[13]

The advantage accruing to the Jaina faith from the activity of Bhadrabahu and his companions in the south and the work of the Patna Council was partially nulled by a serious divergence which appeared in the Church about this time. Tradition asserts that one group of monks, consisting of some followers of Bhadrabahu who returned from the south to Magadha after a period of twelve years, were shocked to find that in their absence the northern brethren had adopted the practice of putting on clothes. This was denounced by them as an act of heresy in conflict with the teaching of Mahavira of which the emphasis on nudity formed an essential part. They also refused to acknowledge the *Angas* as settled by the Pataliputra synod as authentic. Thus arose the great schism in the Jaina order and gradually the monks became divided into two sects, the Svetambaras (i.e., those who put on white clothes) and the Digambaras (i.e., who practised nudity), into which the Jaina community is still broken up. The traditional account of the schism cannot fail to remind us of the conditions which prevailed in the Buddhist Sangha on the eve of *its* first great division. It would seem that about the beginning of the third century there had arisen a strong school of thought in the Jaina Church, favouring a liberalisation of the rigid monastic rules in opposition to the orthodox or conservative section which would permit no relaxation of the old discipline. The quarrel about the wearing of clothes was probably only one, though the most important one, of the points of dispute between the contend-

ing groups. As in the Buddhist Sangha about 380 B.C., so in the Jaina Order about 300 B. C., such differences became acute and, reconciliation being found impossible, resulted in the split. It is possible, as is argued by some authorities, that formally the Church remained united for some time more and the irrevocable separation between the two divisions did not take place until a few centuries later. But it is certain that the conflict of ideologies which led to the final rift began about the time of Bhadrabahu and Sthulabhadra, if not earlier still.

We know very little about the history or activities of the Jaina Sangha during the third and second centuries B. C. The impetus that Buddhism received under Asoka must have to some extent impeded the growth of Jainism though a Buddhist tradition preserved in the Divyavadana about the massacre of a large number of Nirgranthas (Jainas) in Pundravardhana (N. Bengal) at the emperor's order is obviously only mendacious legend. Jaina writers affirm that their religion made great progress under Samprati, probably a grandson of Asoka, who 'was the great Arhant to establish *viharas* for *Sramanas* even in non-Aryan countries'. But it is quite impossible at present to form a correct estimate of the success with which his efforts for popularising Jainism were rewarded.

B. BRAHMANISM

With the expansion of Buddhism and Jainism under the Mauryas, Brahmanism received a serious set-back and was forced to climb down from the high pedestal it had occupied so far. From the third century B.C. a 'heterodox period' of more than five hundred years' duration may be said to begin in the religious history of India when the status of Buddhism remained at least equal, if not superior, to that of the orthodox creed in the country. Though Brahmanism had many enthusiastic supporters, kingly and common, in the interval, it was only in the Gupta period that it regained its position of decided dominance.

It is necessary to add here that the preponderance of Buddhism from the Maurya age to the rise of the Guptas does not imply numerical superiority. The bulk of the people were probably still following the Brahmanical religion, or rather the superstitious animistic practices which Brahmanism had made its own. But in the higher and more enlightened sections of the population

Buddhism commanded greater popularity. It is in this sense only that we can speak of the period in question as the 'Buddhist Period' of India.

In the tenth *prapathaka* of the Taittiriya Aranyaka, assigned to the third century B. C by a competent authority,[14] there occurs a passage expressly identifying Vasudeva (Krishna) with the Brahmanical god Vishnu and the deified sage Narayana. It is obvious from this reference in a scriptural text that the attitude of the orthodox Brahmanists to Vasudevism, not altogether friendly in the earlier period, was now wholly favourable and attempts were being made to draw the sect of the Vasudevakas or Bhagavatas into the fold of the Vedic religion. The reason of this change is not definitely known, but it is highly probable, as suggested by Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri,[15] that it was the rapid growth of the heterodox religions, specially Buddhism, under the Mauryas that led the Brahmanists to adopt this reconciliatory attitude and give an acknowledged place to Vasudava-Krishna in their pantheon. It appears from the notices of Megasthenes and the companions of Alexander that the cult of Vasudeva was fairly popular in some regions of Northern and North-Western India, and the Brahmanas would naturally be anxious to enlist the support of its numerous followers in the fight against heterodoxy. 'The Bhagavatas, on the other hand, probably thought it politic to attach to themselves the honour and prestige due to an old and time honoured name'.[16] The rapprochement or amalgamation of Bhagavatism and Brahmanism had important consequences for both. While it enabled the former to spread quickly to the different parts of the country, it also led ultimately to the predominance of the theistic devotional element and the comparative insignificance of the mechanical sacrificial ritual in the latter. The devotional worship of Vishnu, along with that of Siva, soon acquired the dominant position in the Brahmanical religion and it has been pointed out that from about the beginning of the Christian era most Brahmanical Hindus have been the devotees of one or both of these deities.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Above, Ch. II.
2. The main sources of information regarding this council are the Dipavamsa, Mahavamsa and Buddhaghosha's introduction to his Samanta-pasadika.

The council is not referred to in the northern Buddhist sources, but this cannot be regarded as an insuperable argument against its historicity.

3. RE VII.

4. Inscriptions of Asoka, CII, I (Hultzsch).

5. According to some writers, Yona may be taken to stand for the Greek countries of Western Asia, Europe and Africa which are referred to in the edicts.

6. The name Suvannabhumi (Suvarnabhumi) seems to have been used in a general way to signify the countries of South-East Asia. But it is generally held that the evangelisers Sona and Uttara established the Dharma in Burma. Buddhaghosha expressly identifies Suvarnabhumi with Burma. Some think of Siam in this connection.

7. According to Hiuen-Tsang, however, Mahendra was a brother of Asoka. Mahendra is said to have been followed by his sister Sanghamitra who propagated the religion among women in Ceylon. The name Sanghamitra, meaning 'friend of the Sangha', has led some scholars to doubt her historical character, but the appellation was obviously assumed by her on entering the Order. Her real name is not known.

8. The characters of these inscriptions are said to be somewhat later than the time of Asoka. But this 'may be due to a redistribution of the relics undertaken sometime subsequent to the death of the theras.' (Age of the Nandas and Mauryas, p. 217).

9. Basham, The Wonder that was India, p. 263.

10. Smith, Asoka (1901), p. 55. Kern, Manual of Buddhism, p. 117.

11. See N. R. Ray, Theravada Buddhism in Burma, pp. 29-30. 'Recent archaeological finds mainly at Hmawza, a small village rich in ancient ruins.........have decisively proved that Theravada or Pali Buddhism was already well-known in and around that country in the fifth and sixth centuries of the Christian era.' Smith argued that there is no reference to the mission of Sona and Uttara in the Kalyani inscriptions (1476 A. D.) which give a history of Buddhism in Burma upto their time. But it has been shown by Dr. Blagden that the inscriptions do refer to the teachers. (Ray, p. 11).

12. Above, p. 204.

13. R. C. Majumdar, Ancient India, p. 179.

14. A. B. Keith.

15. H. C. Raychaudhuri, Material for the Early History of the Vaishnava Sect, 2nd. Ed., p. 52.

16. R. C. Majumdar, op. cit., p. 183.

PART IV

DISINTEGRATION AND FOREIGN INVASIONS
(B. C. 184—319 A. D.)

CHAPTER I

Fall of the Magadhan Empire under Pushyamitra and his successors

The revolt of Pushyamitra in 184 B. C. is regarded by some as an act of unselfish patriotism meant solely to rid the country of the weakness of the later Mauryas at the critical time when the Greeks were threatening its liberty and culture. The murder of Brihadratha, one enthusiastic author requires us to believe, was a 'cruel necessity', perpetrated by the Brahmana general in the true Cromwellian spirit. Very little being really known about the personal character and motives of the latter, this must remain a pleasing hypothesis, impossible to prove or disprove.

The Puranas describe the usurper and his descendantas as Sunga. The Sungas are known to Panini and other authorities as a priestly family of the Bharadvaja lineage (*gotra*) and it has been pointed out that Saungiputra, 'son of a female descendant of Sunga' and Saungayani, 'descendant of Sunga', occur as names of teachers in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* and *Vamsa Brahmana* respectively. It is, however, somewhat difficult to reconcile the Puranic statement with the testimony of the *Malavikagnimitram* which represents the family of Pushyamitra as Baimbika.[1] It may be argued that the Baimbikas were a sub-division of the Sungas or *vice versa*, but we must remember that authorities on Brahmanical *gotras* and *pravaras* describe the Bimbikayah, i.e., the probably the Baimbikas, as of *Kasyapa* lineage[2] while the Sungas were, as we have seen, Bharadvajas, and in a covert allusion the *Harivamsa* also seems to refer to Pushyamitra as a commander of Kasyapa descent.[3] Though the question may not be regarded as finally settled, the testimony of the *Malavikagnimitram*, supported indirectly by that of the *Harivamsa*, should certainly be preferable to that of the uncorroborated statement of the Puranas and it is somewhat curious that the observations of Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri raising doubts about the veracity of the Puranic tradition on the point have so far not received the attention they

deserve. Devabhuti or Devabhumi, the last of the 'Sunga' kings mentioned in the Puranic lists, was probably really a Sunga as he seems to be described as such in the *Harshacharita* of Banabhatta, and the existence of a Sunga family is attested by inscriptions of about the beginning of the first century B. C., the date of Devabhumi, at Bharhut. It is not improbable that the 'Baimbika' dynasty of Pushyamitra was followed by a true Sunga family and the confused tradition of the Puranas has grouped the two together under a common name. The antecedents of the Baimbikas are unknown and an attempt to infer an Iranian origin from the name-ending—*mitra* is certainly erroneous. Another theory that Pushyamitra and his successors were probably Kshatriyas is also equally ill-founded. Whether Sunga or Baimbika, Pushyamitra was a Brahmana. He is distinctly described as a Brahmana king who had at first been a *purohita* by Taranath and is called a *dvija* in the *Harivamsa* where it is clear from the context that the expression can signify only a Brahmana or a Vaisya, but not a Kshatriya. The name Baimbika has apparently no connection with Bimbisara and his family. The appellation 'Sunga', however, is in general use for Pushyamitra's dynasty and may be retained as a convenient label.

Some light is thrown on the history of the reign of Pushyamitra by the *Malavikagnimitram*. The author of the drama apparently had a considerable knowledge of the Brahmana king and his family and his work may be regarded as a good source of their history. An incidental reference in the play informs us about a successful war waged by Pushyamitra's son, Agnimitra, on Yajnasena, the ruler of Vidarbha. Yajnasena is described as a natural enemy (*prakrityamitra*) of the 'Sungas' and a ruler with a newly founded kingdom (*achiradhishthitarajya*), weak like a recently planted sapling (*navasamropanasithilastaruh*). It appears that when Pushyamitra carried out his *coup d'etat* and imprisoned his chief rival, the Maurya minister, Yajnasena, who is represented as the sister's husband of the latter, declared his independence and commenced hostilities. The course of the conflict cannot be followed clearly but it seems that the 'Sungas' sided with Madhavasena, apparently a rival claimant for the throne of Vidarbha, and ultimately Agnimitra, who was probably the Viceroy of Vidisa, defeated the armies of Vidarbha in war. Yajnasena had to agree to a division of his kingdom between himself and Madhavasena and

both the princes seem to have accepted the suzerainty of Pushyamitra.

The *Malavikagnimitram* also refers incidentally to an encounter of the king's forces with the Greeks. On the right or southern bank (*dakshinarodhasi*) of the river Sindhu, we are told, a division of Yavana horsemen attempted to capture a sacrificial horse let loose by Pushyamitra for celeberating the Rajasuya rite. There ensued a 'greate battle' in which the Indian troops, escorting the horse under Vasumitra, the valiant young grandson of the Brahmana monarch, defeated the aggressive foreigners and rescued the steed.

Patanjali, who was probably a contemporary of Pushyamitra, alludes in his *Mahabhashya* to an extensive warlike activity of the Greeks in India. Exemplifying the use of the imperfect tense to denote events not seen by the speaker and yet recent enough to have been witnessed by him, the grammarian gives the illustrations *Arunad Yavanah Saketam* (the Yavana besieged Saketa) and *Arunad Yavanah Madhyamikam* (the Yavana besieged Madhyamika). Saketa was identical with, or close to, Ayodhya in U. P. and Madhyamika is represented by modern Nagari near Chitor. Reference has been made above to a passage in the *Gargi Samhita* which speaks of Yavana expeditions against Saketa, Panchala, Mathura and Kusumadhvaja (Pataliputra) after Salisuka Maurya (c. 200 B.C.). It is generally assumed, perhaps rightly, that the two sources, the *Mahabhashya* and the *Samhita*, refer to episodes in the same invasion, and Patanjali's evidence would suggest that this deep thrust of the foreigners into the interior of India took place before the end of Pushyamitra's reign.[6]

The Yavanas of the above passages were no doubt the Greeks of Bactria, but the sources do not give any clear information about the Indian king's conflict with them. It is even uncertain if the Greeks first broke through the north-western passes in his own reign or in that of his predecessors, and it is likewise difficult to ascertain if the brunt of their great expeditions against central and eastern India, referred to in the *Gargi Samhita* and hinted at in the Mahabhashya, had to the borne by the later Mauryas or Pushyamitra or both. Patanjali was a contemporary of Pushyamitra, but he may have been a contemporary of some of the later Mauryas also. Relying on the fact that the *Samhita* speaks of the expeditions immediately after mentioning Salisuka Maurya (c. 200 B.C.), many writers are inclined to place them in the time of the later Mauryas and think

that the overthrow of Brihadratha by Pushyamitra 'may have been one of the consequences of the success of the Greeks against the Mauryas'. Others, however, point out that as, according to the same text, the invading Greeks 'will not (could not) stay (long) in Madhyadesa as there will be (was) a cruel and dreadful war in their own country, arising among themselves' and as dissensions among the Bactrian Greeks in the post-Salisuka period started only about 175 B. C., the advance to Pataliputra presumably took place at the cost of Pushyamitra himself. As on many other vexed questions of ancient Indian history, no final judgement on this point seems possible at present. Assuming that the invasion occurred in the Brahmana monarch's own time, we are further conforted with the question if his opponent who penetrated into Central India and the Gangetic Valley was Demetrius or Menander, the two among the Indo-Greek rulers who are thought of in this connection. Demetrius was certainly a contemporary of Pushyamitra. The date of Menander is not equally definite, but there are some reasons to hold, as we shall see, that he probably flourished about 150 B.C, and his claim cannot be altogether ignored.

Where was the Sindhu on whose banks the army of Pushyamitra is said to have scored a triumph over the Greek horsemen? Following Cunningham, many writers take it to be a Central Indian stream, a tributary of the Jamuna or the Chambal bearing the name Sindhu, but its identification with the Indus, proposed by Wilson and strongly defended by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, appears equally, if not even more, plausible. It has been held that the encounter on the river probably took place in the early years of Pushyamitra and was one of the first tentative clashes of the Bactrian and Magadhan arms in the Indus region. Considering, however, that the king's grandson was old enough to be entrusted with the responsibility of leading the horse-guard, a date in the later part of his reign, c. 160-150 B. C., would appear to be more reasonable and the reference may he interpreted to mean that Pushyamitra fought hard against the Greeks, who had earlier crossed the Indus in his own reign or in that of his predecessor, and the latter were for a time pushed back to the river or beyond. The date of the Yavana exploits in the heart of India noticed by Patanjali and Garga may be uncertain, but it seems almost certain that the Indian dominion of Demetrius (c. 190-165 B. C.) included at least considerable parts of the Punjab and

Sind. It is not improbable that the internecine strife of the Greeks, commencing with the 'revolt' of Eucratides against Demetrius in c. 175 B. C., gave Pushyamitra a good opportunity to recover some of the lost provinces and carry his arms as far as the Indus. But did the Indus, supposing it is Kalidasa's Sindhu, remain his north-western frontier to the end? We do not know if the events mentioned in the Mahabhashya and the *Gargi Samhita* occurred before or after the clash on the Sindhu and, in any case, the possibility of the contemporaneity of Menander, who is known to have 'crossed the Hypanis and reached the Isamus, with Pushyamitra makes it doubtful.

In the opinion of some historians the rulers of Vidarbha and Bactria were not the only enemies of Pushyamitra and he had to fight against Kharavela, the celebrated king of Kalinga, also. It is argued that 'Bahasatimita, the lord of the Magadhas' who is said to have been defeated and 'compelled to bow down to his feet' by Kharavela in a great northern expedition undertaken in the 12th year of his reign is no other than Pushyamitra. But the contemporaneity of these two kings is extremely doubtful and it appears much more probable that Kharavela flourished long after Pushyamitra.

It is somewhat difficult to form an exact estimate of the extent of the Magadhan Empire at the time of the Brahmana king's death which, in accordance with the Puranic testimony, probably occurred in 148 B. C. after a reign of 36 years. The insufficiency of our knowledge about his struggle with the Greeks makes it hard to say whether the dominions he bequeathed to his successors extended to the neighbourhood of the Jamuna or to the Beas or even the Indus beyond it. Certain Buddhist works represent him as harassing the Buddhists in the north-western regions about the end of his life, but it is unsafe to draw any conclusions reading chronology from such traditional accounts. In the south the empire probably stretched from Magadha to Central India, the Vidisa region being certainly included in it. At first the Narmada probably constituted the boundary of Pushyamitra's kingdom—we read in the *Malavikagnimitram* of a 'frontier fortress' of his on that river—but later Vidarbha also seems to have become a part of it.[7]

Pushyamitra apparently retained the title of *Senapati* even after his assumption of the full sovereign power. A Brahmana by birth, he was a determined champion of the Brahmanical faith

and sought to rescue it from the comparative unimportance into which it had fallen in the time of Asoka and his successors. The testimony of the *Malavikagnimitram* and the *Mahabhashya* shows that he celebrated Vedic rites involving the slaughter of animals prohibited by Asoka. The double performance of the horse-rite by him is testified to by the Ayodhya inscription referred to above, which expressly applies the epithet '*dvirasvamedhayaji*' to him. That this was considered an important event in the Brahmanical circles is suggested by the fact that the *Harivamsa* makes a veiled but pointed reference to the *revival* of the Asvamedha by the Brahmana commander in Kaliyuga. There seems to be good ground for the view that Pushyamitra was the patron of Manu, one of the pillars of the Brahmanical religion and a staunch advocate of the social superiority of the Brahmanas, and it was obviously under his inspiration that Patanjali, another Brahmanist, illustrating Panini's rule about *rajya*, cited *Brahmanarajya* as the example *par excellence* in place of *kshatriyarajya* in his grammatical work. With lesser certainty the Brahmanisation of some parts of the epics may also be assigned to his time. His great devotion to the Vedic faith probably made him hostile to Buddhism which was at this time bidding fair to outstrip the orthodox religion in the country. Buddhist tradition is anything but complementary to him and 'represents him as a cruel persecutor of the religion of the Sakyamuni.' Stories of the atrocities perpetrated by him on the followers of the Buddhist faith—killing of monks and burning of monasteries—are preserved by the *Divyavadana*, the *Aryamanjusrimulakalpa* and the writings of Taranath and it seems quite unjust, despite the much legendary matter mixed up with them, to dismiss them as altogether without a basis in fact.[8] Sir John Marshall points out that at Takshasila there is evidence of some damage done to Buddhist establishments about this time and that in the case of the great stupa at Sanchi 'there is all too clear evidence of damage wrought during the persecutions by Pushyamitra.'[9] In recents years, the Allahabad University Kausambi Expedition has brought to light indubitable traces of destruction and burning in the great monastery of Ghoshitarama at Kausambi in the second century B. C. and the Director of the Expedition, Sri G. R. Sharma, is inclined to connect the phenomenon with the persecutions of Pushyamitra.[10] Some modern writers have tried to explain the anti-Buddhist activities of Pushymitra as due

to political reasons rather than sectarian rancour. They hold that, dissatisfied with his adoption of Brahmanism as the state religion, the Buddhists, specially the monks, probably became politically active against him and may even have sided with his enemies, the Greeks, with the result that he had to put them down with a heavy hand. There is little in the extant record to support this important conclusion and the possibility that the Brahmana monarch's hostility to Buddhism was due to religious fanaticism cannot be altogether excluded.

According to the Puranic traditions, Pushyamitra was followed on the throne by Agnimitra (8 years), Vasujyeshtha or Sujyeshtha (4 years) and Vasumitra (10 years) successively. In the Puranic lists the names of the successors of Vasumitra are given as Bhadraka (Odruka, Ardraka etc. 2 or 7 years), Pulindaka (3 years), Ghosha (3 years), Vajramitra (7 or 9 years), Bhagavata (32 years) and Devabhuti or Devabhumi (10 years). We learn from the *Harshacharita* of Banabhatta that Devabhumi was the victim of a conspiracy organised by his Brahmana minister Vasudeva of the Kanva or Kanvayana family who had him assassinated through a slave-girl disguised as the queen. This event probably occurred in c. 72 B. C. as the total duration of the reigns of all the kings from Push amitra to Devabhumi is recorded as 112 years in the Puranas. The *Harshacharita* appears to describe the murdered prince as a scion of the Sunga line. If Pushyamitra was not a Sunga, when was it that his family went out of office and was replaced by that of the Sungas? The *Harshacharita* tells us that king Sumitra (probably no other than Vasumitra, the grandson of Pushyamitra), being over-fond of drama, was shorn of his head by Mitradeva 'as a lotus is shorn from its stalk.' It is not improbable that it was at this point that the dynastic change occurred.

The treacherous minister Vasudeva became the founder of a new royal dynasty, known as Kanva or Kanvayana. It consisted of only four kings, including the founder, and ruled for a total period of 45 years, till c. 27 B. C. The other three members of

the dynasty are said to have been Bhumimitra, Narayana and Susarman.

The authority of the empire declined steadily under these later kings after Pushyamitra. *If* the Greeks were far beyond the frontiers of Madhyadesa in c. 148 B. C., they pressed forward again and, the numismatic evidence would suggest, occupied the country upto the Jamuna. Buddhist tradition seems to locate Pushyamitra's capital at Pataliputra, but there is some reason to believe that, in his own day or under his successors, the imperial headquarters were shifted to Vidisa in Central India which *may* have been the home-town of his dynasty. A well known Garuda Pillar Inscription discovered at Besnagar (ancient Vidisa) informs us that a Greek named Heliodorus, a resident of Taxila, visited the court of Maharaja Kautsiputra Bhagabhadra (evidently at Vidisa) as the envoy of king Antialcidas, a Greek ruler of the north-west. Bhagabhadra is usually identified with Bhadraka (Odruka, Ardraka), the fourth successor of Pushyamitra in the Puranic list, and is supposed to have flourished about 115 B. C. The fact that his alliance was courted even by foreign potentates of the distant north-west strongly suggests that his sway was acknowledged over a good part of North India and that the imperial authority had not vanished from the country, though its centre was now *probably* Vidisa in place of Pataliputra. It is, however, clear that the effective sphere of that authority was now dwindling day by day and local elements had begun asserting themselves at the cost of the central power of the empire. It has been held, on the basis of coin-finds, that about the end of the second century B. C. (about 100 B. C.) the city of Kausambi which had been the head-quarters of a provincial governor under the Mauryas and possibly also under Pushyamitra and his immediate successors, 'became the capital of a local family of rulers' which issued a distinctive series of coins known as 'Kausambi coins'. About the same time or a little later, a new ruling house was established in Panchala (Rohilkhand and the adjoining area), likewise known chiefly from its coinage. Gradually the other regions of U. P., such as Kosala, also emerged as seats of regional kingdoms, under their own kingly families. The position of the early kings of these families *vis-a-vis* the latest Sungas and Kanvas, with whom some of them were probably contemporary, is not clear. It may be that in a vague way some of them paid allegiance to the latter as the great feudal lords nominally acknowledged the supremacy of the Moghul emperors in the last days of the Delhi Empire ; but, even if so, it is certain that for all practical purposes they behaved like independent rulers. The conditions in Bihar, if we are right in holding that it was no longer the chief seat of the imperial government,and other parts of the

Ganges basin were probably not dissimilar. As the centrifugal process made headway and independent or semi-independent states sprang up in the Gangetic Valley, the empire gradually grew weaker and its effective control probably became restricted to the Vidisa region in Central India and the adjoining tracts. It is exclusively from this part that the later positive evidence bearing on the successors of Pushyamitra comes. Thus, another Garuda Pillar Inscription discovered at Bensagar refers to the reign of Maharaja Bhagavata who is apparently identical with the penultimate king of the Puranic list of 'Sunga' rulers. An inscription, engraved on the railings of the Buddhist stupa at Bharhut (Nagod state) and assignable to the first century B.C. on paleographical grounds, commemorates additions made to the great monuments at the place 'during the sovereignty of the Sungas.' The actual power of the Kanvas was also probably confined to Central India and the contiguous regions. The final end came in c. 27 B.C. when the last of the Kanvas was overpowered by Simuka Satavahana. The Satavahanas seem to have occupied only the Malwa region and probably never interfered in the politics of the north. But their triumph over the Kanvas gave the death-blow to the fabric which was already in the final stage of decay. With the discomfiture of Susarman, the last bonds of the empire snapped. The rulers of the Gangetic valley —those of them who had not already repudiated the sovereignty of the Kanvas—asserted complete independence, and the last vestiges of political unity disappeared from North India.

We are now in a position to form some idea of the causes leading to the decline and downfall of the first comprehensive empire of India. In the gradual disintegration of the great political fabric which at one time embraced nearly the whole of the country we can clearly perceive the operative hand of the same common factors which brought about the collapse of many other empires, Indian and foreign. The empire of Chandragupta and Asoka fell mainly because those who followed them on the throne lacked their personal eminence. With the possible exception of Pushyamitra, none of them seems to have possessed the ability or even the will, to hold the empire together when it began to bend and break up under the burden of years and trouble. The very bulk of the structure proved detrimental to its security. The continued maintenance, as one political unit, of the vast stretch of territory from the Hindukush to Bengal and from Kashmir to Mysore constituted a baffling problem in those

days of meagre and difficult communication which the weak successors of Asoka were unable to cope with. There had been rank misgovernment in the outlying parts even in the days of the great Mauryas—Asoka makes a candid confession about Kalinga and the Divyavadana attributes two serious uprisings in Taxila to the high-handedness of the officers of Bindusara and Asoka—and it does not seem probable that matters improved in the time of their successors, one of whom is expressly accused of tyranny in an old text. From the beginning the empire seems to have carried the seed of destruction within itself. Despite the best efforts of Kautilya and Chandragupta there still flourished within its orbit many semi-independent chieftainships and tribal states which were a potential source of danger. Yavanas, Kambojas and Gandharas in the north, Andhras, Bhojas, Pulindas in the south and many others bided time eagerly and seized the first opportunity to revolt as soon as the central power began to show signs of enfeeblement. Their example was not lost upon the other regions where also refractory elements soon began to raise their heads and clamour for independence. The spirit of local autonomy which could have been checked or reconciled only by a highly enlightened and efficient government grew steadily strong. The prestige and authority of the empire suffered greatly due to the frequent change of regime and the acrimonious internal politics which brought it about. Last, but not the least, in its stage of decline, when it had already lost to a considerable extent the power to sustain external shocks, the empire was caught by the violent impact of serious Yavana inroads which further weakened the bonds that held it together. The offensive of the Yavanas under Demetrius and his successors may not have proved as deadly ruinous to the early empire of Magadha as did that of the Hunas in the case of the Gupta Empire, but it was certainly one of the important factors contributing to its dismemberment.

Attention has already been drawn to the view of some modern scholars that the pacifist policy of Asoka must be held largely responsible for the downfall of Magadha. It has been shown that there was nothing doctrinaire about that policy and it could hardly have been harmful to the integrity of the empire. We must disabuse our minds of the silly notion that Asoka disbanded the army or was resolved not to fight wars of any type. He *did not disband the army and* was fully prepared to use violence for meeting

external aggression or internal disturbances. His approach to the problems of government and state was that of a profound humanist; he wished to run his administration on enlightened principles and regulate his relations with the contemporary powers by love and co-operation, but he did not belittle the importance of the organisation of force for political security. Under him, the Indian Empire in the 3rd century B. C. followed a course similar to the one the Indian Republic has been following under the inspired leadership of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru since the achievement of freedom in August, 1947. Asoka was the great champion of peace and the arch-enemy of war in his time as Nehru is today; the one laboured as much as the other to create a 'climate of peace' in the world, and neither can be accused of weakening India military.

There is very little force in the contention that the empire of Magadha 'was founded by a policy of blood and iron and could only be maintained by following the same policy.' It is perhaps the false analogy of the Roman, Achaemenian and other empires of the ancient world that has led some historians to advance this argument. The continued use of the policy of blood and iron may have been necessary in the case of these non-Indian empires for they were made up of diverse racial and cultural elements with nothing but political ties to bind them together. Their pattern necessiated 'periodical reconquest of the conquered.' But the Magadhan empire was a true national empire of which the territorial components were already parts of a cultural whole. Given a sympathetic and enlightened government, like that of Asoka, at the centre, the necessity of holding the different parts together by sheer force would be obviated to a large extent, and a more effective bond of union would be forged than the mere pressure of force could ever achieve. The empire of Magadha declined, we may well assert, not because the successors of Asoka continued his policy but because in their pettiness they could *perhaps not continue it.*

The only basis of the accusation brought against Asoka seems to be the fact that within a few years of his demise, if not immediately after it, the empire began to show symptoms of disintegration and foreign aggressors, who had failed against Chandragupta, now succeeded against it. But it is not necessary to suppose that it was the pacificism of Asoka which led to this development. The other factors enumerated above were quite sufficient to produce

the result. We must remember that there are numerous instances of great empires declining after militant rulers; and how many of the successors of Asoka under whom the empire languished and disappeared really cared for his pacificism?

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. 'Dakshinyam nama bimboshthi Baimbikanam kulavratam' (Mal., Act IV, verse 14). It is argued by some that Baimbika here may signify only a 'nayaka of the dakshina variety.' But such an interpretation is ruled out by the context of the verse. Dr. D. C. Sircar points out that in other places Kalidasa has used the expression 'kulavrata' in the sense of a vow or practice prevalent in a family, cf. 'Accompanied by the queen, he repaired to the shadows of the hermitage groves. This was the family vow (kulavrata) of Ikshvakus of advanced age.' (Raghuvamsa). The contention that in the Harivamsa, Kasyapa may have been used in the sense of a general gotra is not convincing. The view that Pushyamitra belonged to the 'dvyamushyayana' called Saunga-Saisireya is not borne out by any evidence.

2. Baudhayana Srauta Sutra (Ed. Caland) Vol. III, p. 449.

3. 'Audbhijjo bhavita kaschit senani Kasyapo dvijah; Asvamedham tu kaliyuge punah pratyahrishyati.—Harivamsa (Bhavishya, II, 40).

4. CHI, I, p. 467 (Indian Reprint).

5. Rapson, CHI, I, p. 469, opines that 'the choice seems to lie between the Kali Sindhu, a tributary of the Charmanavati (Chambal)........and the Sindhu, a tributary of the Jamuna.' This seems unlikely in view of the fact that Agnimitra and his chief queen Dharini, though residing in Vidisa, which is quite close to the above named streams, are said to have received the news of their son's (Vasumitra's) encounter with the Greeks through a letter sent to them by Pushyamitra, apparently from Pataliputra. Elsewhere in the drama Dharini is depicted as a devoted mother, anxiously worshipping gods and giving charities for the welfare of her son. She was not likely to have lost contact with the latter if he was moving about in the neighbourhood of Vidisa. Cunningham's main argument was that the Indus flows from north to south and so has no southern bank. But the word 'dakshina' can mean 'right' also and it may be pointed out that Sindhu of Central India also flows north to south. It is not improbable that there was a sharp bend in the course of the Indus at some place thus giving it a southern bank.

6. Patanjali refers to the invasion of the Yavana as a thing of the past, but uses the present tense to denote a sacrifice of Pushyamitra (Iha Pushyamitram yajayamah).

7. The Ayodhya Inscription of his sixth descendant, Dhana (deva), calls him a senapati and in the Malavikagnimitram also he is uniformly denoted by the same appellation. A recent writer has advanced the view that Puṣhyamitra probably never assumed the regal style and title himself

and ruled in the name of his son Agnimitra who is called 'raja' in the Malavikagnimitram. But it may be pointed out that in the Puranas he is described as 'nripa' or 'king and . the performance of the Rajasuya by him is itself proof that he was the de jure as also the de facto sovereign.

8. According to the Divyavadana his attempt to destroy the Kukkutarama at Pataliputra was foiled by supernatural agency. He then turned his attention to the west and massacred monks and demolished monasteries until he reached Sakala, where he made the famous declaration : Whosoever gives me the head of a Sramana, him I shall give a hundred dinars.' He ultimately perished at the hands of the Yaksha Krimisa, being crushed to death underneath a boulder hurled by the latter.

A similar story is told in the Aryamanjusrimulakalpa. 'There is no doubt that in that worst of ages, there shall be a king Gomimukoya, who shall be an enemy of my (i.e., the Buddha's) religion. From the eastern quarter upto the Gates of Kasmira, that wicked-minded person shall kill noble bhikshus and destroy viharas containing holy relics. His death will take place in the north. Along with his people, quadrupeds and relatives, he will go to Patala, being crushed by a boulder 'hurled by an angry, super-human agency.' As this account occurs immediately after that of the Mauryas, the reference is obviously to Pushyamitra. Dr. P. C. Bagchi (IHQ 1943) has made the plausible suggestion that Gomimukhya is probably a Prakritised form of Gaulmika-mukhya meaning the chief of the commanders of army divisions, i e., commander-in-chief or senapati.

Taranath informs us that Pushyamitra, the Brahmana king, killed bhikshus and burnt monasteries from the Madhyadesa to Jalandhara.

9. In Taxila, Vol I.

10. A group of Indologists, including Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri, have expressed skepticism about the veracity of the Buddhist stories regarding the persecutions of Pushyamitra. The principal evidence cited by them seems to be that of an inscription which was engraved at Bharhut 'during the sovereignty of the Sungas' (suganam raje), to record some additions to the Buddhist monuments .of that centre. It is argued, on the basis of this, that the religious policy of the Sungas was a tolerant one and so the Buddhist stories regarding the intolerance of Pushyamitra should be treated with due caution. But this contention loses much of its force when we remember that Pushyamitra was probably not a Sunga at all, but a Baimbika of the Kasyapa gotra, Even assuming, that he was a Sunga, it must be borne in mind that on paleographical grounds the inscription in question has been assigned by competent authorities to about the beginning of the first century B.C., i.e., about 50 years after the death of Pushyamitra. It appears that he successors of the Senapati wisely abandoned his militant religious policy and reverted to the traditional Indian policy of toleration, In the Divya-

vadana Pushyamitra is represented as a scion of the Maurya family itself. But neither such a lapse nor the introduction of marvellous details in the story or the mention of 'dinaras' in the Divyavadana, can be regarded as a sufficient reason to discard its testimony regarding the presecutions of the king. It is difficult to explain why Pushyamitra is described as an enemy of their faith by the Buddhist writers if he was not actually hostile to it: In the Malavikagnimitram the viceregal court of Agnimitra is said to have been adorned by Bhagavati Kausiki, but there is nothing to show that she was a Buddhist. The Divyavadana probably refers to some Buddhist ministers at the court of Pushyamitra but there no evidenoe that the king retained their services after the enunciation of his anti-Buddhist policy.

CHAPTER II

After the Empire

The history of India loses its unity for a time as the authority of the 'Magadha' Empire gradually recedes from the extreme ends towards the central regions and finally collapses there. Successive waves of invasion establish foreign ruling dynasties in the north-west, and a number of small states, localised in extent and significance, spring up on the ruins of the empire in the Gangetic Valley and adjoining areas. In south India also, there probably ensues a period of fragmentation though we have no clear glimpses of the political picture of the region for a long time. A new ruling house, that of the Satavahanas, rises into importance in the Deccan towards the close of the first century B. C. In the present chapter we propose to deal with these various political powers of India before the coming of the Kushanas. The age of the Kushanas constitutes an epoch by itself.

A. THE GREEKS, SAKAS AND PARTHIANS IN THE NORTH-WEST

The foundation of the Maurya dynasty had sealed off the north-western frontier of India to external aggression. Capable of holding its own against any contemporary power of the world the mighty empire of Chandragupta and Asoka had created conditions of inviolable security along the frontier-line. But as the central authority of the empire grew weaker and cracks appeared in the body politic under the sussessors of Asoka, danger began to threaten from the west. Ominous rumblings could be heard beyond the horizon and aggressive foreigners cast their longing eyes on the plains of the Ganga and the Sindhu. The hostile pressure increased in proportion to the decreasing strength of the empire and not many years had elapsed before the deluge of invasion, starting from the trouble-spot of Central Asia, struck the country completely inundating the north-west. Wave after wave of invaders topped the Suleiman and Brahui,

mountains and crashed into the lowlands of the Punjab and Sind.' The first thrust of aggression brought the Creeks of Bactria (Balkh, to the north of the Hindukush) into the country.

a. THE INDO-GREEKS

Most writers now think that 'small colonies of Asiatic Greeks had been settled in Bactria by the Achaemenians' and these were strengthened by Alexander and Seleucus Nicator to whom the province passed successively after the Persians. About the middle of the third century B. C. the satrap Diodotus, apparently taking advantage of the pre-occupation of Antiochus II (261-246) and Seleucus II (246-226 B. C.) in the west, became independent and set himself up as sovereign there. He was followed on the throne of the newly founded kingdom by his son, also named Diodotus. The new prince appears to have had only a short reign and was murdered by Euthydemus, a Greek adventurer hailing from one of the West-Asian cities known as Magnesia.

When Euthydemus had been on the throne of Bactria for some time, he had to face an invasion of his dominions by Antiochus III, the contemporary Seleucid emperor, who wished to bring the lost province back to submission. The Bactrian king failed to hold the line of the river Arius against the invading army but with heroic defiance withstood a close siege of his capital, Bactra, for about two years. At the end of this period negotiations for peace were started, mainly through the good offices of one Teleas, who succeeded in convincing the Syrian monarch that the internal quarrels of the Greeks would give encouragement to the Central Asian nomads then constantly hovering on the northern confines of Bactria, and if they succeeded in destroying the Bactrian kingdom, it might mean serious danger for the entire Hellenistic world. The contending parties then met in a conference in 206 B. C. at which Euthydemus was represented by his young son, Demetrius, a comely youth whose manners and bearing so impressed the Syrian king that he promised him a daughter in marriage. Euthydemus was allowed to retain the title of King and the severance of Bactria from the Seleucid Empire became final. After thus settling the Bactrian

question, Antiochus crossed the Hindukush, and descending along the valley of Kabul, reached the kingdom ruled by Sophagasenus, king of the Indians, 'revived his friendship' with him, and received from him the present of a large treasure and a number of war-elephants. This transaction over, he marched back to West Asia by way of Arachosia (Kandhar), Drangiana (Seistan) and Carmania, apparently recalled by urgent developments there. His Indian expedition 'amounted to little more than a reconnaisance in force'. Not known from any other source, Sophagasenus may have been one of the later imperial Mauryas, but was more probably a local ruler of the north-west, possibly a successor of Virasena of Gandhara. There is no clear evidence that he was defeated or had to offer submission to the Syrian king as Tarn and other scholars seem inclined to think, neither can the latter's march through Arachosia be taken as proof that his authority was established there. Arachosia may have been a part of the kingdom of the friendly Sophagasenus.

Some time after the expedition of Antiochus, the Bactrians themselves began to expand their power to the south and ultimately reached India. The declining might of Magadha and the confused conditions in the borderland had created a situation which they apparently exploited to the full. Numismatists have noted that while the silver coinage of Euthydemus is plentiful in Balkh and Bokhara (north of Hindukush), it is less abundant in Kabul, Kandhar and Seistan where, however, his bronze money is very common. This distribution of coins would normally be taken to indicate that the southward movement of the Bactrian power began under Euthydemus himself and he annexed a considerable part of Afghanistan along with the contiguous tracts of Eastern Iran to Bactria. Ptolemy, in his *Geography*, furnishes the interesting information that the town of Sagala (Sakala, Sialkot) in the Punjab was also known as Euthymedia and the latter is usually taken to be a mistake for Euthydemia. Several scholars, therefore, consider it not improbable that Euthydemus secured a foot-hold in India itself before his death of which the date is not known but which is placed by most writers about 190 B. C.

The non-mention of Euthydemus in reference to the expansion of Bactrian power in the literary sources, however, makes it difficult to be certain on the point. The chiefs named in this connection are Euthydemus' son and successor Demetrius, Menander and possibly Apollodotus. It may, therefore, after all be that the theory, advocated by Tarn and others, placing the commencement of the southward movement of the Greeks in the early years of Demetrius is right or that the latter undertook some of his early campaigns of conquest as the colleague of Euthydemus, as held by Gardner. Be it as it may, Demetrius is the first Bactrian king whose connection with India is undoubted and it is generally thought that the Greek advance on India began under his auspicies. Energetic and ambitious by temperament, he was remembered by the Graeco-Roman authors as a great conqueror for his a leading part in making Bactriana 'the ornament of all Ariana' and establishing Greek power in India.

His association with India is testified to by literary as well as archaeological sources. It has been pointed out that some of his copper coins of the square shape with legends in Greek on the obverse and in Kharoshthi on the reverse were obviously meant for circulation in his Indian dominions. He is generally identified with king **Dattamitra** mentioned in the Mahabharata, apparently in connection with the country of Sauvira (lower Indus Valley) and the **Vyakarana** of Kramadisvara refers to a city called **Dattamitri**, probably founded by him, in the same region. The town seems to have flourished for a considerable period and is perhaps alluded to in cave inscriptions of Western India, though Johnston is sceptical about a Demetrias in the Indus delta. Another town, Demetriaspolis in Arachosia, also seems to have owed it origin to him. Justin expressly describes him as the 'king of the Indians' and legend probably still remembered him as the ruler of some Indian territories in the thirteenth century when we find Chaucer referring to 'Grete Emetreus, the king of Inde' in his **Knightes Tale**.

The extent of his conquests and rule in India is not clearly astertainable. The presence of cities named after him and his father is commonly supposed to indicate his hold over the Punjab (or a part of it) and the lower Indus Valley (Sind) and with the latter he seems to be conected in Indian legend also. But there is some ground for supposing that his Indian venture affected a much more extensive area than this. It may be that it was he who planned and directed the great expedition into the interior of India, mentioned in the **Gargi Samhita** and hinted at in the **Mahabhashya**, in the course of which the Greeks fought in place like Saketa, Madhyamika, Panchala and Mathura and finally reached Pataliputra itself (see above). The advance of the Greeks to Pataliputra seems to be noted by Strabo also who tells us that those who came after

Alexander reached the Ganges and Palibothri. The assumption involves no chronological difficulty as the **Samhita** refers to the invation after a a king (Salisuka) of about 200 B. C. and, if Demetrius' identification with Timitra named in a seal found at Besnagar is correct, this may furnish some evidence of his advent into the eentral parts of India. His identification with the Greek king (**Yonaraja**) Dimita who seems to be mentioned in the Hathigumpha Inscription of Kharavela in connection with Magadha or Mathura, however, is difficult to accept. Though some leading Indologists place Kharavela in the same general period as Demetrius, the sources really seem to point to a later date for the Kalinga monarch and the **Yavanaraja** refered to in his record. Tarn, following Jayaswal, takes the word 'Dharmamita' occurring in connection with the Yavana inroads in the Gargi Samhita to stand for Demetrius, but the faulty language of the text makes it hard to be certain that it is a proper name.

Speaking of the victories of the Bactrain Greeks towards the south, Strabo tells us on the authority of Apollodorus of Artemita : 'These conquests were achieved partly by Menander, partly by Demetrius.. They got possession not only of Patalene (the Indus delta) but also of Saraostos (Kathiawar) and Sigerdis (probably Sagaradvipa, meaning Kutch ?) which constitute the remainder of the coast.' The story of the western conquests of the Greeks receives some confirmation from the testimony of the anonymous author of the **Periplus**, who, visiting the emporium of Barygaza (Broach) in the neighbourhood of Surashtra, in the first century A. D., noted that the coins of kings Apollodotus and Menander were still current in its markets. The sources do not give the name of the king who carried the Greek banner to Kathiawar and Broach, but as a prince named Apollodotus was a contemporary of Demetrius and seems to have been overcome not long after him by their common foe, Eucratides, it is not improbable that the occupation of the coastal tract as far as Barygaza was accomplished in the time of Demetrius himself. Prof. Tarn may be right in supposing that Demerius' invasion of India took the form of a double-tongued advance, one part of the army proceeding to the Gangetic Valley and Pataliputra by way of the Punjab and the other passing down to the Indus delta and thence along the coast to Barygaza. It must, however, be remembered that these conclusions, though quite probable, are by no means certain. The view of some historians that the Yavana ruler who invaded the central and eastern regions of India and threatened Pataliputra was not Demetrius but Menander, another well-known Indo-Greek ruler credited with extensive conquests by the Graeco-Roman writers, is, as we shall see later, not altogether untenable and the possibility that king Apollodotus named in the **Periplus** was not the contemporary of Demetrius but a later prince who flourished after Menander or that Barygaza was conquered by Apollodotus independently after Demetrius also

cannot be ruled out. In certain sources these two, Apollodotus and Menander, seem to be mentioned as important Greek chiefs of India.

A brief reference may be made here to the somewhat elaborate theory formulated by Tarn regarding the Indian wars of Demetrius. He envisages the Bactrian monarch as taking up an ambitious plan of conquest in India shortly after the accession of Pushyamitra in 184 B. C. to secure for himself the imperial position formerly enjoyed by the Mauryas. Apollodotus and Menander co-operated with him in the venture as his lieutenants. While the former led the armies across the Punjab to the Gangetic Valley and Pataliputra, the latter directed the coastal line of advance to Barygaza. and the orders of the generals were to join forces in Central India, possibly at Vidisa Menander proclaimed himself the defender of the Buddhists, at the time suffering from the religious persecutions of Pushyamitra, and the Greeks may have been assisted by some foreign tribes settled in the north-west. With due regard to the high authority of Tarn it must be stated that much of this is purely hypothetical. Such an association of Menender with Demetrius seems, as another authority on the subject points out, unlikely,[6] and it cannot be definitely asserted that all the victories of Demetrius in the interior of India, if he really reached it, were achieved at the cost of Pushyamitra. It has already been said above that several scholars regard his Indian expedition as a principal cause of the downfall of the Mauryas.

Whatever the role of Demetrius in Indian history, for a time he apparently ruled over a large kingdom from the Oxus to the Indus, if not further beyond to the east and south. But he was not destined to retain this position of eminence to the end and his authority soon received a rude shock when Bactria was wrenched away from his hands by a certain Eucratides. Nothing definite is known about the antecedents of Eucratides. He may have roused the disgruntled Greek settlers of the colony to rebellion on his own behalf, or he may have come there as a champion of the Seleucid cause, being himself a general and brother-in-law of Antiochus IV, as Tarn thinks. His usurpation or conquest of Bactria may be placed about 175-70 B C. for Justin tells us that he began to rule among the Bactrians about the same time when Mithradates I, whose reign-period is generally given as 171-138 B. C., ascended the throne of Parthia. The ensuing struggle between him and Demetrius was a spirited one. If the latter was really the Yavana ruler whose exploits are described in the Gargi Samhita, the testimony of the chronicle may show that he recalled his great expedition from the heart of India in order to effectively meet the grave challenge in the home country. But Eucratides displayed remarkable energy and resourcefulness in the crisis. Referring to an interesting episode in the duel between the two famous adversaries, Justin

relates how he, on being besieged by Demetrius, King of the Indians, with a garrison of only 300 soldiers, repulsed by continuous sallies a force of 60000 enemies. Demetrius failed to achieve the purpose for which he had probably given up the Ganges basin; Eucratides remained supreme in Bactria and founded there the city of Eucratidaea after his name. Demetrius is lost to history after this, his latest years being involved in total obscurity. Eucratides did not remain content with the possession of Bactria and was before long following up his triumph by campaigns across the Hindukush. It may be that Demetrius fell in the attempt to oust him from Bactria or to check his advance to south, but we cannot be certain of this. In any case, be probably did not survive the rise of Eucratides by many years and the end of his eventful career is generally placed about 165 B.C.

Eucratides was successful in the southern wars also and, following in the foot-steps of Demetrius, be too reached India. Justin says that he reduced 'India' to subjection and his bilingual coins with legends in Greek and Kharoshthi no doubt prove his hold over some parts of India or the borderland. Some of these coins, bearing the inscription 'Kavisiye nagara-devata' (the city-divinity of Kapisi), are often coins of Apollodotus res-truck, and clearly show that this king was overthrown in Kapisi, i. e., the Kafiristan District and the valleys of the Ghorland and Panjshir rivers. by Eucratides. Apollodotus probably belonged to the family of Demetrius and may have been a brother of his, as suggested by Tarn. It may be that in the course of his struggles Euratides had to fight with some other champions of the Demetrian cause also, including kings Agathocles and Pantaleon and possibly Antimachus, Euthydemus II and Demetrius II. These chiefs are known only from their coins and are assigned to the same general period as Demetrius and his rival by some numismatists. How far Eucratides advanced into India cannot be definitely ascertained at present, though the presence of the 'Victory' type in his coinage is interpreted by some to indicate occupation of the entire county as far as the city of Nicaea on the Jhelum. There is, however, no evidence that he ever proceeded, or even attempted to proceed, beyond the Indus Valley.

It is possible that the internal quarrels of the Greeks enabled Pushyamitra to carry his arms to the Indus.. If so, it was probably only a temporary reverse for the foreigners and soon they were again masters of the Indus Valley. But the unity of their rule was broken and their possessions were divided between two rival houses. Their subsequent history in India and the borderland is largely uncertain, full of baffling problems and annoying gaps leading to much conjecture and several parallel reconstructions. Several Greek rulers, including two queens, of the post-Demetrius

period are known, the main testimony of their existence being furnished by their coins. Only a few of them are mentioned in epigraphic records or literature and the problem of their relative chronology and relationship with each other is in an unsettled state. Though it is not improbable that upstarts arose now and then to claim the kingly dignity, it is thought that most of these rulers belonged to the rival houses of Demetrius and Eucratides and, on the basis of their coin-types, attempts have been made to assign them to one or other of the dynasties with some plausibility. There was perhaps frequent readjustment of frontiers but, in a general way, it may be said that the Jhelum constitued the boundary between the two or more principalities ruled by princes of the two houses. Those who represented the House of Demetrius ruled mostly to the east of the river while princes belonging to the family founded by Eucratides flourished mainly in the region to the west of it. The rivalry of the two leaders was inherited by their successors and did much to undermine the foundations of Greek rule in India.

1. HOUSE OF EUTHYDEMUS AND DEMETRIUS

The most famous of the Greek rulers of India in the period after Demetrius is Menander. Like that of many other well-known personages of ancient Indian history, the date of this prince, who figures prominently in the Buddhist tradition, is involved in controvesy, the discussion now centring mainly round two alternatives, c. 150 B. C. and c .00 (110-90) B. C. There can be no finality about any conclusion at present, but it appears that no strong evidence has been adduced so far to invalidate the numismatic arguments of Rapson in support of the first of these dates, and we may accept, as a provisional hypotheis, that Menader reigned about the middle of the second century B. C.[13]

Numismatists point out that his coin-types connect him with the family of Demetrius, but the nature of the connection is not clear; he may have been one of that family, but it is also possible that he found a place in it only by marriage. As maintained by Rapson, it is by no means improbable that he was the husband of Queen Agathocleia, perhaps a sister or daughter of King Agathocles of the Euthydemian dynasty, and

succeeded to the possessions and prestige of that house through the right of his wife.[15] Dr. P. C. Bagachi tells us that his coin-portraits do not present the characteristic physiognomy of the Euthydemians.

His identification with Milinda, the inquisitive and learned *Yona* (Greek) king of Sakala (Sialkot), whom the *Milindapanho* represents as entering into a spirited philosophical discussion with the sage Nagasena, is generally upheld and may be considered as almost certain. It appears from the Buddhist classic that he was born in the village of *Kalasi* (Kalasigrama) in the *Alasandadvipa*. The identity of this place is not definite, but as it is said to have been five hundred *yojanas* distant from Sakala, it is not improbable that the reference is to the Greek colony of Alexandria-under-the-Caucasus in the Upper Kabul Valley, though other Alexandrias have been proposed for the honour, specially the one in Egypt.[14] If the tradition that Menander was born in a village is correct, it will perhaps mean that he was a commoner by birth and rose high in the political and social scale by dint of his merit. Prof. Tarn informs us that Hellenistic queens did not live in villages and the suggestion that Kalasi may be only a variant of Kapisi, the name of a great town of the Upper Kabul Valley, is hard to accept. Some writers are inclined to dismiss the connection of Milinda with Alasanda as legendary, but perhaps without much justification.

Whoever Menander may have been and in whatever manner he gained the throne, it ts clear that he was an ambitious and capable ruler and made substantial additions to the kingdom inherited or won by him. Along with Demetrius, he is given the credit by the Graeco-Roman writers for 'subjugating more nations than Alexander' and expanding the Greek rule in India. Strabo quotes a tradition, probably preserved by Apollodorus, that he 'crossed the Hypanis and reachedthe Isamus'. The Hypanis is apparently the same as the Hyphasis or Beas and the Isamus is commonly supposed to be the Jamuna or a neighbouring stream, presumably the Ikshkumati running through Rohilkhand, whose Prakrita name may have been something like Ichchhumai. This 'classical account of the eastward expansion of Greek power under him is corroborated to some

extent by the distribution of his coins, these being found as far east as the western districts of U. P. and even in Bundelkhand. The presence of the figure of a camel on some of the pieces is taken by some to denote the king's authority over a part of Rajputana. Towards the south-west, his kingdom probably extended as far as Barygaza (Broach), as we are told by the *Periplus* that even in the first century A. D. his 'coins, along with those of Apollodotus, were in circulation in the markets there. Two hoards of his coins in mint condition have been discovered in the Bajaur and Swat valleys and his copper issues are said to occur upto the Hindukush. A solitary tetradrachm of his, struck on the Attic standard, has also been found. It may be inferred from this that he ruled the entire country as far as the Hindukush and, contrary to general belief, may even have held a part of Bactria in his power. Coin-finds are not a sure indication of political authority, but his hold over at least a part of the Kabul Valley is definitely proved by the discovery of a relic casket, bearing inscriptions engraved on it, in Bajaur.[16] The inscriptions refer to the establishment of the ashes of the Buddha by a pious Buddhist in the fifth year of king Menadra (Menander).

Menander was thus a powerful ruler who exercised authority over wide regions extending from the Kabul Valley to the Jamuna and possibly stretching to Bactria and Barygaza. As noted above, many historians are inclined to think that he was the Yavana invader whose success in penetrating into the Middle Country and advancing to Pataliputra is recorded in the *Gargi Samhita* and the *Mahabhashya*. The date proposed for him here is not in conflict with this view and considering that it is he, and not Demetrius, whose coins are found in the Gangetic Valley and that it is to him specially that the classical writers assign the honour of 'conquering more nations than Alexander' and proceeding beyond the Beas, the theory cannot be regarded as altogether ill-founded. 'The statement that the expedition was recalled on account of the war which had broken out between the Yavanas themselves in their own country, is in accordance with what may be inferred as to his date. Menander and Eucratides were almost certainly contemporary. Some of their square copper coins are so similar in style that they may reasonably be assigned not only

to the same general period, but also to the same region—a region which must have passed from one ruler to the other.' Opinion on the point, however, must be reserved.

Menander ruled with Sakala in the Punjab as his capital and was a conscientious sovereign, renowned for the justice of his government. According to an old authority, he enjoyed such wide-spread popularity with his subjects that upon his death diverse cities contended for the possession of his ashes and raised *stupas* over them The love of the Indian people for this king of alien nationality need not surprise us for he was possessed of a remarkable catholicity of outlook which enabled him to appreciate the finer points of Indian life and culture and recognise their superiority over the Hellenistic tradition to which he was born. Like Kanishka at a later date, he was 'a foreigner by birth but an Indian by choice.' Deeply impressed by the truth and beauty of the Buddha's teachings, he discarded his ancestral paganism and became a convert to the Buddhist faith, thus setting a noble example followed by many Greeks in India after him.[16] He gave expression to his partiality for Buddhism in the selection of his coin-types and may even have wished to present himself in the light of the traditional 'Chakravarti Dharmiko Dharmaraja' to his subjects. Monkish tradition affirms that under the influence of the *thera* (elder) Nagasena he renounced the throne in favour of his son, retired from the world and became an *Arhat*. But the legend finds little support in authentic evidence and is falsified by Plutarch's statement that the king breathed his last in camp. Menander probably accepted Buddhism only as an *upasaka* (lay devotee) and never passed into the 'houseless state.'[17]

The *Milindapanho* describes Menander as a ruler of wide learning and high intellectual and artistic accomplishments. 'He was scholarly, clever, wise and capable. He had mastered the various arts and branches of learning such as Sruti, Smriti......... ... Nyaya, Vaiseshika, arithmetic, music, science of war .... As a debator, he was considered invincible and without a second.' A similar conventionalised description of his capital, Sakala, also occurs in the work :

'The city of Sakala belonging to the Yavanas ! It was a great centre of commerce and industry......built by skilled architects. All its enemies had been defeated and the people suffered

in no ways......Like the peaks of the Himalayas, there were hundreds and thousands of lofty mansions......Kshatriyas, Brahmanas, Vaisyas, Sudras, Sramanas, and leaders of groups—all were to be found there. It attracted scholars and learned men and was full of shops dealing in cloth manufactured at Kasi, Kotumbara and other places......Stalls of luxury goods were scattered everywhere......Abounding in Karshapanas, silver, gold, bronze and stone, it was itself a bright treasure of precious gems. Fertile as Uttarakuru and attractive as Alakananda, the city of gods,—such was the town of Sakala.'

The end of the reign of Menander may be placed tentatively at about 145 B. C. As said above, Plutarch tells us that he died in camp. This suggests either a campaign or an inspection tour of the kingdom.

If the view of Rapson about the relationship of Menander with Agathocleia is correct, the numismatic testimony might be interpreted to mean that that his son, Strato, being still a minor at the time of his death, the reins of government had to be taken up by the queen-mother, Agathocleia, and the period of the regency is represented by some coins on which the names of the mother and son appear in conjunction. Later, when he came of age, Strato assumed the full regal style and authority and issued money in his name alone, with the title Soter. These coins clearly indicate a long reign towards the later part of which the king's grand-son, bearing the same name as he and the epithet Philopater, was associated with him as a junior colleague. Even if the numismatic inference about the kinship of Strato with Menander is not accepted, the general period of c. 145—100 B. C. for Agathocleia and the Stratos is *probably* not far wide of the mark for they seem to have come into conflict with King Heliocles who appears to be no other than the successor of Eucratides (c. 145-30 B. C.), though some would take him to be a a later prince of the same name. The period of Strato's rule, both as a minor and as a major, was apparently marked by trouble and witnessed a decline of the power and prestige of the House of Euthydemus. A serious blow seems to have been struck by Heliocles. This prince probably lost Bactria

(or the greater part of it) to the nomads of Central Asia but seems to have made amends for the northern losses by conquests effected in India at the cost of the Euthydemids. He has restruck some coins of Agathocleia and Strato I ruling conjointly as also of Strao ruling alone. The old feud between the two rival houses was evidently resumed or continued with considerable vigour in the time of these princes and the Indian issues of Heliocles would show that he deprived his aantagonists of a substantial stretch of territory, as far as the Jhelum in the opinion of some authorities. The misfortunes of the Euthydemids did not end here. About this time they seem to have lost their possessions in Rajputana and Western India also and the market town of Barygaza probably slipped out of their control. There is no evidence that the Greeks retained hold of these for any considerable length of time after Menander. During the conjoint rule of the Stratos or not long afterwards, Greek authority was probably overthrown in the country to the east of the Ravi and the city of Mathura, which controlled the passage to the Madhyadesa, was gone. In Mathura, a dynasty of Hindu kings seems to have risen to power while in the other parts of the Ravi-Jamuna tract the end of the Greek power was apparently due to the successful revolt of the native tribes inhabiting them such as the Audumbaras, Trigarttas, Kunindas and Kulutas.[18]

During the early years of the first century B. C. or somewhat later, Euthydemid rule thus became confined to the territory between the Jhelum and the Ravi and it was in this narrow strip of land, comprising parts of Central and Eastern Punjab, that all the later members of the dynasty held away. Quite a few of these are known and it would appear that some of them ruled contemporaneously over small neighbouring districts, thus accelerating the pace of deterioration by their internal acrimony and division.[19] Soon a new danger appeared on the scene. Invaders now entered the country from the north or west, or both the directions, and commenced hostilities against the houses of Demetrius and Eucratides. Maues or Moga, one of the earliest leaders of the newcomers, probably led his warlike followers up the Indus from his base in Sind and the devitalised Greeks, torn by their internal dissensions, failed to present a strong front to him. Before long,

he had wrenched away the country round Taxila (Eastern Gandhara) from the unfortunate descendants of Eucratides. Scholarly opinion is divided on the question if he made himself master of the two remaining districts of the Eucratidians, Western Gandhara and Kapisa-Paropamisadae, also. Even if he occupied Taxila only, his victory must have proved militarily disastrous to the Greeks for it must have driven a wedge between the possessions of the Euthydemids and the Eucratidians, thus precluding the possibility of an effective collaboration of the two in face of the common danger. He *may have* waged war on the House of Euthydemus also, but it appears that his success against it, if any, was by no means conspicuous. The *Athena Alkis* type which appears to have been the main type of the descendants of Menander is conspicuous by its absence in his abundant currency and no cases of his overstriking the coins of any of the Euthydemid princes seem to be known. It would thus seem that the final overthrow of the House of Demetrius was not his work. But this did not unduly postpone the evil day. The last princes of the Euthydemid line to rule over any considerable regions in India were probably Apollodotus II and Hippostratus. During the reigns of these princes, the eastern Greek kingdom or kingdoms apparently received constant hammerings from the aggressors and finally disappeared under their blows. Azes I, the successor of Maues, restruck some coins of both of them and used some of their distinctive monograms on his own issues. Besides, he also minted money of the *Athena Alkis* type. Numismatic testimony is thus strong that he made a successful onslaught on the House of Euthydemus and Demetrius and overwhelmed it.

The date of the above events leading to the discomfiture of the Euthydemids is not clearly known and conflicting opinions have been expressed on the subject as also about the nationality of the invaders. It is, of course, hard to be definite, but we shall probably not be far in the wrong if we place the losing struggle of the Greeks against these enemies in the period c. 80-30 B.C. Maues was almost certainly a Saka, though some would call him a Parthian, and Azes also appears to have been a Saka though others postulate a Parthian or mixed Saka-Parthian origin for him.

2. HOUSE OF EUCRATIDES

After his victories in Bactria and India, Eucratides enjoyed a position of considerable importance and influence among the contemporary rulers some of whom are known to have imitated his Indian coinage.[20] As the master of a 'thousand cities', perhaps of Bactria, he felt himself justified in assuming the title 'The Great' (*Megas*) and issued an abundant coinage including a 'monstrous' gold piece weighing as much as 2593.5 grains (168.05 grammes). But his difficulties were also formidable. We are told by Justin that he had to fight not only against Demetrius but also with the Sogdiani (rulers of Sogdiana). Sogdiana or the Bokhara region to the north of the Oxus had *probably* by now been occupied by the Scythians from Central Asia and their pressure on Bactria was being increasingly felt. A determined enemy was Mithradates I, the ambitious ruler of the neighbouring kingdom of Parthia to the west. Information is on record that when Eucratides was exhausted by the long struggle with his enemies Mithradates made war on him and permanently annexed two districts of his kingdom whose names are given as Aspionus and Turiva. The identification of these is not certain, but the view of some that they stand respectively for Aria (Herat) and Arachosia (Kandhar) has much in it to commend itself. The advance of the Parthians in the direction of Arachosia and the Indus seems to be confirmed by the deposition of Orosius that Mithradates reduced the entire country between the Hydaspes (apparently the Medus Hydaspes, a stream in Persia, mentioned by Virgil) and the Indus.[21]

The end of Eucratides was a tragic one. On a march homeward to Bactria he was assassinated by his son who was his colleague in the government of the realm (c. 150 B. C.). The parricide is said to have adopted an unusually callous attitude on the occasion and driven a chariot through the blood of his murdered parent.

The murderer was probably Heliocles.[22] The new prince evidently continued the feud with the Euthydemids and perhaps made some conquests in India, as already seen. But an

unfavourable developmen took place in the north about this time. The impatient nomads of Central Asia, impelled by a powerful pressure from the rear, at last burst the doors of Bactria and smashed the Greek power there. The generally accepted assumption that Heliocles was the last Greek king whose money circulated in any part of the country to the north of the Hindukush may, after all, be incorrect.[23] But there can be no doubt that he was the last to rule over any considerable portions of Bactria and after the nomad conquest Greek rule could have survived only in some small, sheltered areas in the south of that province.

It is a pity that no clear account of this important event, the end of Greek rule in Bactria, which was to have important repercussions on the history of India and her borderland, has been preserved. Speaking of the fall of Greek Bactria, Strabo says : 'The best known of the nomad tribes are those who drove the Greeks out of Bactria—the Asii, the Pasiani, the Tochari and the Sakarauli, who came from the country on the other side of the Jaxartes over against the Sacae and Sogdiani, which country was also in possession of the Sacae'. The identification of the tribes mentioned in this passage presents a difficult problem, but the Sacae and the Sacarauli were apparently Scythic (Saka) tribes and it is possible that the others also belonged to the same stock. It will be remembered that in c. 206 B. C. Euthydemus of Bactria had supported his request to Antiochus III for a settlement by pointing out that the northern nomads would be greatly encouraged if the Greeks fought among themselves. Of the nomads referred to here, the most important were those belonging to the various branches of the Scythic race, whom the Persians designated in a general way as Saka. Driven by the force of circumstances beyond t eir control the Sakas now crossed into Bactria, and overwhelmed the Greeks there. As will be seen later, their arrival and settlement in Bactria seems to be attested by Chinese chronicles also. Different writers have identified the Asii or the Tochari with the people known as Yueh-chi and the suggestion has also been made that the Tochari constituted the bulk of the Yueh-chi hordes while the Asii

formed their aristocracy. None of these theories can be regarded as definitely proved, though something *may* be said in favour of all of them. If we suppose that the Yueh-chi had a hand in the expulsion of the Greeks from Bactria, it will perhaps be necessary to conclude that they ousted the latter only from some small districts in the south which the Sakas had not conquered before them. Certain authors, however, believe that in the nomadic hosts which shattered the Greek power in Bactria, Sakas and Yueh-chis were already inextricably mixed up.[24]

The subsequent history of the House of Eucratides is very imperfectly known. A prince named *Amtalikita* is mentioned in a Besnagar (Vidisa in Central India) Garuda Pillar Inscription as having sent a certain Heliodora (Heliodorus), a resident of Taxila, to the court of Maharaja *Kautsiputra* Bhagabhadra when the latter was 'prospering' in the fourteenth year of his reign. Amtalikita is evidently identical with king Antialcidas whose existence is disclosed by coins found in the north-west and who is regarded as a Eucratidian. The reference in the Besnagar Inscription would suggest a date about 115 B. C. for him, and it is not improbable that he was the immediate successor of Heliocles.[25] It is generally thought that he held his court at Taxila from where the ambassador Heliodorus went to Vidisa. His kingdom may have extended from the Jhelum to the Hindukush and probably included a part of Bactria also.[26]

It is not improbable that he sought the friendship of Bhagabhadra against the growing pressure of the Sakas and the Yueh-chi. In the time of his successors the hostile pressure increased greatly and large parts of the Greek territory fell to the advancing enemies. The decline of the House of Eucratides was perhaps hastened by the division which seems to have beset it after Antialcidas. With the possible exception of *Archebius*,[27] no prince of Eucratidian birth is known to have ruled over the entire possessions of the western Greek kingdom after him. It is thought that on his death, or not long afterwards, that kingdom was split up into smaller principalities, held by contending chiefs some of whom exercised sway over small districts only. The growing internal

weakness soon began to affect the foundations of Eucratides' House and its members were gradually forced out of their territories by powerful adversaries by whom they were surrounded on all sides. Their meagre possessions in Bactria, if they had really any left by now, were *probably* conquered by the Yueh-chi. To the south of the Hindukush also their districts of Kapisa-Paropamisadae, Western Gandhara and Eastern Gandhara now began to feel the impact of approaching danger. The last Eucratidian to rule in the first of these was perhaps Hermaeus. His date is not known for certain. Some early archaeologists assigned him to about 40-30 B.C., but, according to others, after new discoveries recently made it is 'beginning to look' as if he commenced his rule considerably earlier, about 80-70 B. C. or even about 100 B. C.[28] As his name figures on some coins jointly with that of the Kushana king Kujula Kadphises he is brought as low as the first half of the first century A. D. by certain authorities. It is not possible to examine in detail these various opinions here, but if indication of preference be permitted, the period 80-60 B. C. is perhaps nearest the mark and Greek rule in Paropamisadae may have ended at the hands of the Saka Maues or the mysterious king Wu-tou-lao whom the Chinese represent as ruling in Ki-pin apparently somewhat before the middle of the first century B.C. It would, however, appear that for a long time debased copies of the coins of Hermaeus continued to be minted in the region by his successors who had no numismatic traditions of their own. Tarn, following Rapson, thinks that Hermaeus was overthrown by Spalirises of Archosia about 30 B. C., but Marshall points out that the 'Zeus enthroned' type coins of Spalirises on which this theory is chiefly based were probably minted in Arachosia and cannot be taken as proof of actual sovereignty over Kapisa-Paropamisadae. Most of those who assign the Greek monarch to the first century A. D. opine that he was overthrown by the Parthians, presumably by Gondophernes.

Eastern Gandhara was probably annexed by Maues and the conqueror of Western Gandhara may have been Maues himself or his successor Azes I, the same chief who seems to have overpowered the Greeks in the eastern part of the Punjab.

b. THE SAKAS AND PARTHIANS

That in 206 B. C. Antiochus III agreed to conclude an unadvantageous peace with Euthydemus of Bactria in view of the threatening movements of the northern nomads can hardly cause any surprise to those acquainted with the political and cultural conditions prevailing in Central Asia and the adjoining regions to the east at the time. The steppe-land and the country abutting on it were populated by a large number of nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes who could hardly boast of any considerable culture but did not lack the usual turbulence and fighting zeal of the barbarian. The Bactrian kingdom constituted the bulwark of the Hellenistic civilisation against their inroads. Once in possession of the Oxus Valley, they would be in excellent position to descend upon the settled world of Iran and Western Asia and threaten it with serious trouble, if not actual disruption. It was good policy on the part of Antiochus to prevent them from gaining access to Bactria even at the cost of having to recognise the independence of Euthydemus. But the Bactrian Greeks failed to rise equal to the task imposed upon them by their geographical position. For a time they reigned supreme in Bactria but subsequently the internecine strife of the rival houses and the feud with Parthia so weakened them that they found themselves unable to hold the nomads in check. Not long after the death of Demetrius and Eucratides, the nomads forced their way into Bactria, with the Sakas as the spearhead of the onslaught.

The tribes of the Sakas belonged to the Scythic race which had occupied large parts of the Eurasian steppes from quite early times. A group of them lived in and about the 'plains of the Syr Darya (Jaxartes), of which the modern capital is the town of Turkestan'.[29] Here they were, beyond Suguda (Sogdiana), when they were reduced to temporary subjection by the Achaemenian emperors and when Alexander led an expedition against them in 327 B C. In the early years of the 2nd century B. C. they were still in the Jaxartes region where they are noticed by the Chinese historians under the name *Sai-wang* or Saka-lords. They probably spoke an Iranian dialect

and wore trousers, boots and a tall cap rising to a point. Great horsemen and expert archers, they were only loosely attached to the soil over which they wandered with their flocks and earned their sustenance by the usual methods open to nomadic populations.

Prof. Thomas thinks that an early wave of tribal movement had left deposits of Scythic settlements in the region of Seistan in Eastern Iran and that these were the Saka Haumavarka (Somavargiya) of the early Persian inscriptions and the Amyrgioi Scythians of the Greek writers.[30] This view, though enjoying considerable vogue at present, has been challenged by some well-known writers who are inclined to think that there were no Scythians in the southern regions before the second century B. C. According to them, the Humavarka-Amyrgioi were neighbours of the Tigrakhauda-Orthokorybantioi and other Saka tribes living on the Jaxartes.

In the second century B. C. a complex chain of causes created a state of wide-spread disturbance in Central Asia which was to strongly influence the history of the western part of Asia as also of India. The factors leading to this may have been partly climatic; perhaps the pastures were going dry in some or most regions and the nomadic populations had to shift their positions. But a great impetus was given to the wave of movements by the turbulent imperialiam of a tribe known as Hiung-nu (Hun). From quite early times the ancestors of this nomadic, semi-barbaric people, called Hun-yu, lived in Mongolia and parts of North-Western China. They were probably of Turkish rather than of Mongol origin. By the close of the 3rd and the beginning of the 2nd century B. C., they had already absorbed a number of kindred hordes, such as the Rung and the Di, and had emerged as a powerful political force fighting with the Chinese for supremacy.[31] The consolidation of the Chinese Empire under the emperor Ch'-in Shih Huang Ti (247-210 B.C.) about this time compelled them to turn their attention to the west and there was a great expansion of Hun power in this direction under the Shan-yu (emperor)

Maodun (208-174 B.C.). Among the numerous tribes defeated by Maodun that of the Yueh-chi deserves special mention. The Yueh-chi, a people of uncertain origin, occupied the south-western part of Gobi (the south-west of Kan-su), in the vicinity of the Huns. The two neighbouring tribes seem to have been traditionally at variance with each other and we learn that they were in the habit of exchanging hostages, evidently to prevent a too frequent outbreak of hostilities. The great Maodun himself had been one such hostage though that did not prevent his father, Touman, from making war on the Yueh-chi during the period of his virtual captivity. The campaigns of Maodun resulted in the offer of tribute and nominal submission by the Yueh-chi and twenty-six other states which 'lay beyond the Yueh-chi.' In the time of Maodun's successor, Giyu (174-160 B. C.), the feud with the Yueh-chi reached the critical stage and the Huns inflicted a crushing defeat on them, forcing them out of their lands. The king of the Yueh-chi was killed and, following an established custom, the victors converted his skull into a drinking bowl, which they used ceremonially for many generations. A small part of the Yueh-chi moved south and found shelter among the Tibetan (Kiang) tribes of the Nan-shan mountains. Eventually these came to be known as Siao (Little) Yueh-chi. But the majority, known to history as Ta (Great) Yueh-chi, fled to the west, guided by the queen of their dead king and, moving in the direction of Lake Issyk-Kul and the Jaxartes basin, arrived in the country of the Sakas. Unable to resist their onslaught, the Sakas abandoned the ancestral territory and passed out in search of new pastures for their flocks. Under the pressure of the Yueh-chi they accomplished what they had failed to achieve so far. They crossed the Jaxartes and occupied the greater part of Bactria driving the Greeks out of it. The Sak conquest of Bactria was probably effected in the time of Heliocles.

A great authority on the subject has pronounced the definite opinion that the 'Saka conquest of Bactria is a myth started by modern writers' and that the destruction of Greek rule in Bactria was the work of the Yueh-chi.[32] But it is difficult to accept this contention in view of the statements of Strabo and Trogus implicating the Sakarauli (Saraucae), evidently the same as the

Sai-wang of the Chinese, in the expulsion of the Greeks from Bactria.[35] Besides, the History of the First Han Dynasty (*Chien han shu*) also states: "Formerly when the Hiung-nu (*i.e.*, the Huns) conquered the Ta Yueh-chi the latter migrated to the west and subjugated the Ta-hia, whereupon the Sai-wang went to the south and ruled over Kipin." It is generally accepted that Ta-hia here denotes the Bactria region and, as Sten Konow points out, the Chinese statement can only mean that the Sakas were in possession of at least some parts of Ta-hia when the Yueh-chi moved in.[33-34]

The Sakas could stay in Bactria only for a short period. The momentum of the migrations was not yet exhausted. We learn from the Chinese records that back in the home country, or on their way to the west according to some, the Yueh-chi had overwhelmed a horde called Wu-sun and killed its king. The infant son of the slain ruler sought and found shelter with the Hun king and was brought up by him. Not long after the Yueh-chi conquest of the Jaxartes plains, he, having now grown into manhood, formed the design of avenging the death of his father. With the willing assistance of his Hun protectors, he led a campaign against the Yueh-chi and routed them. Expelled from Trans-Sogdiana (the Jaxartes region), the Yueh-chi followed the route earlier taken up by the Sakas and entered Bactria. Their arrival caused a fresh exodus of the Sakas and the Oxus Valley was finally captured by them about 130 B. C.[36]

We have no clear knowledge of the movements of the Sakas after their dispersal from Bactria. The Chinese historians tell us that their king went south and 'ruled over Kipin'. Kipin is a term of uncertain connotation taken to denote Kashmir by some and the country which was included later in the Kushana Empire by others but which probably stands for the Kabul-Kapisa-Kafiristan district here. It has been argued that the annalists had a faulty or only a partial knowledge of the complex events which marked the history of the migrants. 'A mass movement of the Sakas in this direction (*i.e.*, in the direction of the Kabul Valley) was barred by the Indo-Greek kingdom of the Eucratidians which was still strong in the Upper Kabul Valley and is known to have

been in existence for many more years there and archaeology also furnishes no positive proof of the rule of the earliest Sakas of India in the Kabul region'. Accordingly, it is held that the 'main movement impeded by the Yavana power in Kabul would naturally be westward in the direction of Herat and thence southwards to Seistan'. The classical writers speak of a great 'Scythic' invasion of Parthia at this period, in the course of which two emperors, Phraates II (138-128B. C.) and Artabanus I (128-123 B. C.), lost their lives. It appears that moving before the Yueh-chi, the Sakas now fell on the Parthian Empire as they had fallen on the Bactrian kingdom only a generation earlier. For a time they probably had the better of the Parthian resistence and large groups of them succeeded in passing down to the rich district round lake Hamun, which was in a loose way under Parthian suzerainty and for which the name Sakasthana (Seistan) begins to appear in the sources from about the beginning of the Christian era. We have referred to the opinion of some that there were already Scythians in these parts and it is thought that the influx of kindered hordes from the north led to the force of expansion they displayed about this time; others, as seen above, deny the contention and think that the Sakas appeared in Eastern Iran for the first time following the northern disturbances in the second century B. C. Whatever may have been the case, the success of the Sakas against the Parthians proved to be a short-lived one. In Mithradates II (123-88 B. C.), the successor of Artabanus, the northerners found a more determined antagonist. This great ruler finally broke the nomad invasion of Parthia. He not only stemmed the onward thrust of the Scythians but also re-affirmed the authority of the empire over the eastern parts, including Seistan. Thus obstructed in the west, the tide of Saka movement was diverted towards India. Following the Arachosia-Baluchistan route many Sakas arrived in the lower Indus country (Sind) and established settlements there. Their early association with this part gave to it the name Indo-Scythia or Sakadvipa.[88]

This appears to have been the course of events, and at present there seems some agreement, though there *are* notable exceptions, that the Sakas came to India not directly over

the Hindukush following the route that the Aryans and the Greeks had followed before them and the Kushanas and the Huns were to take up later, but indirectly *via* Eastern Iran. It may be, as the Chinese historians suggest, that small batches of the Scythians entered the Kabul Valley directly from Bactria, but their activities do not find prominent mention in the sources. 'There is no doubt that the Saka occupation of the western part of northern India was principally the work of the Sakas of Eastern Iran.' Kings of the Upper Kabul like Wu-tou-lao and Yin-mo-fu, mentioned by the Chinese writers, may have belonged to the stock of the immigrants from the north, but they are shadowy figures and hardly anything is known about them.[87]

Difficulties arise as soon as we try to trace the political vicissitudes of the Sakas in India itself. Among the better known non-Greek foreign rulers of the north-west after the fall of the Mauryas and 'Sungas' and before the arrival of the Kushanas, *viz.*, Maues, Azes I, Azilises, Azes II and Gondophernes, for none is a purely Saka extraction universally accepted. While the consensus of opinion seems to regard Maues as a Saka, some regard him as a Parthian ; the next three chiefs are believed to have been of Saka origin by some, of mixed Saka-Parthian lineage by others and Parthians by the rest. Gondophernes, as the name suggests, was perhaps a Parthian and is generally supposed to have been so. The question is a vexed one, and we shall be indicating our preference as we proceed with the reconstruction.

The earliest of these kings was probably Maues, known from a large number of coins issued by him in India and there seems good reason for the commonly accepted view that he was a Saka (see below). He is probably identical with the 'Great King' (*Maharaya Mahanta*) Moga mentioned in a copper plate inscription, found at Taxila and bearing the date 78 of an unknown era. Some scholars have tried to dissociate the two kings from each other, but, it appears, without sufficient ground. According to Sten Konow, Maues-Moga is also referred to in a Maira (Salt Range) record of the year 58, evidently of the same era

There is some reason to think, as Dr. A. S. Altekar points

out, that he was a feudatory of the Parthians at first.[40] On some of his coins which are mere copies of Parthian prototypes he is given only the minor title of 'king' while the epithets on the Parthian originals are high-sounding, almost divine, honorifics, thus strongly suggesting that these coins were minted by him early in his career while he still regarded himself as a vassal of the Parthians. It is uncertain if he came to India to effect new conquests on behalf of the Parthians, *or*, he was the chief of a local Saka settlement of Sind-Baluchistan over which Mithradates II had extended his authority, the country having probably been claimed as a part of the Parthian Empire since the days of Mithradates I. Most of the coin-types, however, apply to Maues-Moga the imperial title Basileos Basileon Megalou (Maharaja Rajatiraja Mahan in the Kharoshthi version) and, as seen above, the Taxila Copper Plate Inscription calls him 'the Great King, the Great.' It is clear that when these types were minted and the inscription engraved, he was no longer a subordinate of the Parthians but an independent sovereign owing allegiance to none. If the chronology accepted for him by us is correct, it was obviously the waning of the Parthian authority after Mithradates II that provided the opportunity for the assumption of independence by him.

His dominions certainly included Eastern Gandhara, with capital at Taxila, as is clear not only from the Taxila Plate referred to above, but also from large finds of his coins in the province. As the evidence stands at present, it seems highly probable that he himself wrested Taxila from the Greek princes of the House of Eucratides who had so far held it, thus beginning the process which finally eliminated the Greeks from India. His coins are imitated from those of both the Yavana families ruling in India and the borderland at the time, thus suggesting that he succeeded to the sovereignty of the Greeks. On the basis of coin-types it has been held that he ruled in Western Gandhara (Pushkalavati) and Kapisa-Kafiristan (Paropamisadae) also, likewise securing them from the Eucratidians. This is not improbable, but must be regarded as doubtful as the coins of the Saka chief are but rarely 'found in the these areas,[41]

and for the present it will be better to withhold judgment on this vexed question. Maues *may* have fought against some princes of the Euthydemian line also, but, if so, it has been shown above that he probably could not achieve any appreciable success in this direction. In one type of his coins bearing the Poseidon device on the obverse, Tarn finds numismatic evidence of a great naval victory achieved by him over the Greeks. If the interpretation is accepted, we might take it as indicating the success of Maues in opening up the route of the Indus to the Punjab from his base in Sind. We learn from the combined testimony of the Kalakacharyakathanaka and the Prabandhachintamani of Merutunga that in c. 61 B. C. certain Sakas penetrated into Kathiawar and Malwa where they overthrew King Gardda-bhilla ; but four years later the invaders were driven out by King Vikramaditya. Prof. Tarn thinks that this short Saka occupation of Western and Central India could not have been independent of Maues. It is dfficult to say if the story is based on truth, and even if it is, Maues had probably no hand in the advance.[42]

A word now about the nationality of Maues. The name strongly suggests a Saka origin ; a chief named Mauaces or Mavaccs (i. e., Maues) is represented by Arrian to have led the Saka contingents against Alexandar at Gungamela and Meuakos and Maophernes are names of European Scythians. Unless, therefore, there is some weighty evidence to the contrary, we must regard him as a Saka. The theory of his Parthian origin seems to be based chiefly on the resemblance of his coins with those of the Arsacid dynasty. But this may easily be explained as the result of his contact with, or vassalage of, the Parthians. Neither is his title 'Basileos Basileon Megalou' any more in the point. A ruler becoming power-ful in the neighbourhood of the Parthian Empire in the period

shortly after Mithradates II—and we shall see presently that this was perhaps the time of Mues.-would naturally assume the high title that the great king had borne, specially if he was a former feudatory of the Parthians. His northern sounding name has led some writers to conclude that he was probably one of those who entered India by the northern route. This is, however, not a necessary inference. We have seen that the northern Sakas themselves probably came to India *via* Eastern Iran and, in any case, there *must* have been some northerners among the Sakas who came from that direction.

Numismatic sources indicate that the successor of Maues in Gandhara was Azes[43]. The nature of the connection of the new 'King of Kings' with Maues is not clear. He may have belonged to his house or group, but it seems that he came of a ruling family that held sway over Arachosia and Drangiana (Seistan) and succeeded to the Saka territories in India after Maues by conquest or through some right of relationship. We have referred above to the conquest of these regions (Arachosia and Drangiana) by Mithradates I and the confirmation of Parthian sovereignty there by Mithradates II. Their direct control by the imperial Parthian government, however, did not last long, and, apparently taking advantage of the set-back received by the Parthian power after Mithradates, the local rulers assumed independence there. The earliest local chief of the region, known from coins, was Vonones, undoubtedly a Parthian, who bore the imperial title 'Great King of Kings'. Coins reveal that with him were associated, apparently as junior colleagues, Spalahora (Spalahores) who is called 'king's brother' (Maharajabhrata) and the latter's son Spalagadama (Spalagadames). His successor in the sovereignty of Arachosia–Seistan was Spalirises (Spalirisa) who had also begun his career as 'king's brother', the king question probably being Vonones, though Herzfeld thinks of Maues in this connection. Some of his coins as 'King of Kings' were issued in his name alone, while others present on the

reverse the name of Azes (Aya) in Kharoshthi. The second variety of coins proves that he had a colleague named Azes governing a territory where the prevailing script was Kharoshthi, and this Azes is generally identified with the successor of Maues. His association with the Arachosian-Drangian rulers has given rise to a controversy about his origin. The relation between him and Spalirises is not mentioned in the coin legends and the silence has been interpreted by some to mean that he was the latter's son. As Spalirises probably called himself a 'brother' of Vonones, a chief of Parthian extraction, Azes and his descendants in India are regarded as Parthians by certain writers. Prof. Thomas, however, opines, about the name Azes, that it is 'on the whole, probably Scythic', and, according to another authority (Rapson), the names Spalahores, Spalagadames and Spalirises also appear to be Scythian. Accordingly, while no definite opinion on the point can be ventured at present, we may hold tentatively that Azes was a Saka. The expression 'king's brother' in the Arachosian coins need not be taken in a literal sense to indicate blood-relationship of the chiefs with Vonones; as maintained by Tarn, it may simply be an honorific title such as is known to have been current at Hellenistic courts. It is not improbable that Vonones, who may originally have been the Parthian viceroy of East Iran, on becoming independent conferred the title with high authority on influential leaders of the local Scythic community to reconcile them to his rule and strengthen *his hands*. Even if Spalirises was a real brother of Vonones, we must not overlook the fact that the assumption that Azes was a son of Spalirises is not a certainty. The close affinity of the coins of Azes with those of Maues, might suggest that they were allied to each other. The theory of the Arachosian origin of Azes, however, appears more plausible.

Whatever we may think about the lineage of Azes, he evidently maintained the aggressive policy of his predecessor. In India he also assumed the imperial title 'Basileos Basileon Megalou' (Rajatiraja Maharaja Mahanta

in the Kharoshthi reverse). Evidence has already been adduced to show that he annexed large parts of the Eastern Punjab, probably by overthrowing Apollodous II and Hippostratus, and thus virtually extinguished the rule of the House of Euthydemus in India. His coins are said to occur as far as Jalalabad showing that he probably ruled in Western Gandhara also, which he *may* have inherited from Maues or, more probably, himself conquered from the contemporary Eucratidians. There is no clear evidence of his rule in Kapisa Kabul–Propamisadae. *If* Maues ruled in that province, it probably fell under the sway of some other king after that monarch or even in his life-time. We have also no definite knowledge of Azes' connection' with Arachosia–Seistan after the period of association with Spalirises.

Azes issued some coins jointly with another king named Azilises, whose name occurs in the form Ayalisha in the Kharoshthi reverse, while the name Azes itself appears in the Greek legend on the obverse. Thus Azilises, *probably* a son of Azes, ruled with 'the latter for some time, obviously in a junior capacity, though the style of both the chiefs is the same—'Great King of Kings'. On another class of coins the name Azilises appears in the place of honour on the obverse while the name on the reverse in Kharoshthi is Aya (Azes). Several pieces bear the name Azilises–Ayalisha alone in both the versions. The obvious inference from this is that there were two princes of the name Azes (I & II), one of them the senior and the other the junior colleague of Azilises. In other words, Azes I seems to have been ssucceeded by Azilises and the latter by Azes II. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the coins with the name Azes (Aya) alone fall into two sharply distiguished classes, evidently issued by two different princes of the same name. Some scholars are of opinion that Azes and Azilises are two forms of the same name,[46] the former being only a contraction of the latter, and all the coins bearing them were issued by only one ruler. But it is

impossible to believe, as Tarn argues, that 'the same engraver on the same coin would use two different forms of the same name' and the abundance of the coins (with their numerous types) also seems to go against the possibility of their being the issues of a single ruler.[47]

The abundant currency of Azilises indicates a fairly long reign. Sir John Marshall thinks that some of his coins presenting the 'Zeus Enthroned' and 'Zeus Standing with Mt. Pilusara' types were issued from the Kapisa mint.[48] This would mean that he inherited the conquering zeal of Maues and Azes I and succeeded in extending the Saka rule to the Hindukush in the west by annexing the district of upper Kabul. But the attribution of Marshall is highly doubtful in view of the virtual absence of the coins of Azilises or his successor in the Kabul region.[49] According to some scholars, the 'Heracles Seated' type coins of Azilises point to his rule over the district of Southern Afghanistan but of this we cannot be certain. The control of Baluchistan and the adjoining areas by the dynasty of Azes may, however, be suggested by the hoard of coins discovered at Chaman.

Azes II, the successor of Azilises, probably made no further conquests in India and it appears that during his time the 'Saka' Empire of the north-west began to disintegrate quickly. A subordinate chief named Rajula or Ranjuvula probably rose to power as a *Kshatrapa*—first at Sakala, it would seem—and subsequently established himself at Mathura, apparently as an independent king with the sovereign title of 'King of Kings, the Saviour'. Another feudal chief, ruling perhaps to the west of the Indus, gained considerable influence and had the satisfaction of seeing his name in association with that of Azes II on coins. He was Aspavarman, son of Indravarman, who enjoyed the status of *Strategos* or general. But if Azes was a Saka, the real danger proceeded not from such internal developments, but from the west. The name of Aspavarman figures conjointly not only with that of Azes II, but also with that of the Indo-Parthian king Gondophernes who probably commenced his reign in 19 A. D. and was on the throne upto at

least 45 A. D. Literary, epigraphic and numismatic evidence to be discussed subsequently will show that Gondophernes probably ruled over nearly the whole of the Indian empire of the 'Saka' 'Kings of Kings' as also the Arachosian-Drangian kingdom of the west. The change apparently took place in the time of Azes II or soon afterwards and is generally thought to have been the result of violent conquest. Rapson and Bachchhofer opine that it was Azes II, and not Azes I, who was at first the colleague of Spalirises in Arachosia and later succeeded Maues in India. But the numismatic objections urged by N. G. Majumdar, Tarn and Marshall against this view seem insuperable.

The fall of the Azes dynasty did not lead to the total extinction of Saka rule. The main contribution of the Saka emperors to the development of polity in India was the introduction of the satrapal system of government. The Scythians had become acquainted with it in the course of their association with the Parthians in Eastern Iran, had found it to their liking and had brought it with them to India. For administrative purposes, their Indian empire was divided into a number of provinces ruled by chiefs, often hereditary, bearing the designation *Kshatrapa* (satrap) or, if they became sufficiently important, *Mahakshatrapa.* While a few of these appear to have come of old local ruling families which had accepted the suzerainty of the foreigners (*e.g.,* the family of Aspavarman), many were of Saka nationality. No systematic account of the satrapal families under the Saka emperors is possible but it appears that Chuksha (modern Chacha to the north of Taxila), Kapisa, Abhisaraprastha, Purushapura (Peshawar), Sakala, Mathura etc. became important seats of satrapal rule. Many of the subordinate gubernatorial dynasties survived the fall of the Saka emperors of the north-west and continued in a semi-independent capacity under their Parthian and Kushana successors. Though the palmy days of the Sakas in North India came to an end with Azes II, at a subsequent period their glory was revived in Western India and the Deccan by the well-known lines of the Kshaharatas and Karddamakas. Under the *Mahakshatrapas* Nahapana (a Kshaharata) and Rudradaman

(a Karddamaka) the Sakas rose into importance engaging in a long and bitter struggle for supremacy with the Satavahanas or Andhras in the Deccan and the adjoining areas. It was only when the last of the Karddamakas was overthrown by Chandragupta II Vikramaditya of the Gupta dynasty in c. 400 A. D. that the Saka chapter of Indian history may be said to have finally closed.

We may now turn for a moment to the difficult problem of the chronology of Maues and the 'Azes kings' which is still far from finally settled. It has been noted above that Maues-Moga is mentioned as the ruling sovereign in a copper plate inscription, found at Taxila, dated in the year 78, and his name has been doubtfully read in the Maira (Salt Range) Inscription, of the year 58, also. Unfortunately the name of the era to which these dates are to be referred is not given and this has given rise to much controversy. 'Marshall recommended an era for the copper plate of Taxila which might have been established by Moga in the year 95 B. C., Banerji recommended one started by Vonones in 100 B. C., Rapson one which began about 150 B. C., Jayaswal one in 120 B. C. and Tarn one in 155 B. C.' There are other views also and some influential Indologists have proposed to identify the era with the Vikrama Samvat, so that the date of Maues falls about 20 A. D. It is difficult to find a way out of this maze of theories and any estimate of the date of Maues is bound to be only a provisional one. The indications, such as they are, seem to point to the conclusion that the Saka chief began his career in the early part of the first century B. C. Sir John Marshall points out that the coins of his successor, Azes I, are found in a stratum at Taxila which 'undoubtedly belongs to the middle of the first century B. C.' and the absence of the round Omicron on Maues' own issues probably indicates the period before c. 40 B. C. Azes II, the third in succession from Maues, flourished contemporaneously with or only shortly before Gondophernes who is generally supposed to have ruled from 19 A. D. to c. 50 A. D. On the other hand, the Saka chief, who, as we have seen, may have been a feudatory at first, could hardly have assumed the imperial

titles before the death of Mithradates II in 88 B. C. We may therefore, tentatively place him in the period c. 80-50 B. C., a date in full conformity with the early character of his coins; some of the pieces are said to have been copied from the coins-types of Demetrius and Strato I. This will mean that of the various theories proposed in this connection those of Rapson, Tarn and Jayaswal are perhaps nearest the truth. If Konow is right in reading the name 'Moa' (Moga) in the Maira record of 58, the Taxila Copper Plate should probably be assigned to the later rather than the earlier part of the king's reign and we may conclude that the era employed in it began about 130-125 B. C. rather than about 155-150 B. C[3]. Many scholars call it 'Old Saka Era' in order to distinguish it from the historical 'Saka Era' of 78 A. D which seems to have originated with the Kushanas. On this view, the reigns of Azes I, Azilises and Azes II may be assigned roughly to c. 40-25 B. C., 25 B. C.—1 A. D. and 1-25 A. D. respectively. The assumption of some, however, that Azes I was the founder of the so-called Vikrama Era of 58 B. C. lacks convincing proof.[4]

Gondophernes, whom we find ruling after Azes II in the north-west, was, as the name suggests, a Parthian. Fortunately, there seems a greater agreement among scholars about the date of this prince than about those of his predecessors. His authority is invoked, under the name *Maharya* Guduvhara, in an inscription found probably at Takht-i-Bahi near Sahbazgarhi in the north-west. The epigraph is dated in the year 103, on the first day of Vaisakha. As in the case of the Taxila Plate the era is not specified, but most writers on the subject are inclined to think that it is no other than the so-called Vikrama Era of 58 B. C., the only notable exception at present being Dr. Leeuw. As the inscription was engraved in the 26th regnal year of the king, Gondophernes may be taken to have ascended the throne in 19 A. D. and reigned at least upto 45 A. D. This chronology fits in well with the fact that in early Christian traditions an Indian king called Gudnaphar, probably Gondophernes, is said to have been converted by the Apostle St. Thomas, though the veracity of the story has been doubted by some.

Like Azes I, Gondophernes also seems to have belonged to Arachosia-Seistan at first. His name occurs on the reverse of some coins of which the obverse bears the legend of a certain Orthagnes. This probably means that he was originally a subordinate ruler under Orthagnes, a Parthian like him. The relation between Orthagnes and the family of Spalirises which ruled earlier in the same region is not clear [50-51]. Sten Konow thinks that Orthagnes (Verethragna) was a title of Gondophernes himself, but this view does not seem to have found much support.

With Arachosia-Seistian as his base Gondophernes seems to have extended his power over North-Western India and the adjoining borderland. A clear evidence of his success is provided by the Takht-i-Bahi Inscription referred to above, which testifies to his rule in Western Gandhara. 'The coins of Gondophernes 'bear the types both of Orthagnes and Azes II and seem to show, therefore, that he had succeeded to the dominions of both these sovereigns', a conclusion further confirmed by the abundance of the king's currency in these areas. In addition, he must have conquered the Upper Kabul Valley which his Saka predecessors had probably failed to subjugate as his coins are said to occur in large numbers in that region. A peculiar symbol found on his coins and not unoften described as the 'Gondophernes symbol' is sometimes found countermarked on the coins of the Parthian kings Orodes I (57-38 B. C.) and Artabanus III (10-40 A. D.). It has been inferred from this that he may have made himself master of some parts of the Parthian Empire as well.[52]

Philostratus, in his *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, informs us that a king named Phraotes, apparently a Parthian, was in possession of Taxila in the year 43-44 A. D. He was not only independent of the Parthian emperor but was powerful enough to exercise sway over the satraps of Sind. As Gondophernes, himself a Parthian, is known to have been ruling in the Indian borderland at this time, it is highly probable, as is contended by Herzfeld, that Phraotes is identical with him.[53] Phraotes may be a western rendering of the epithet *Apratihata* occurring on the coins of Gondophernes. The great king—certainly

the greatest of the Indo-Parthians—thus seems to have ruled over extensive dominions embracing Seistan-Arachosia, Kabul Valley, the Punjab, Sind and possibly a part of the Parthian Empire.

Troublous times, however, were fast approaching. We learn from Philostratus that the Parthian monarch had to engage the services of certain 'barbarians' in order to meet the aggression of other barbarians who were constantly worrying him by their raids. There is little doubt that these last mentioned barbarians were the Kushanas who had by now founded a strong, united Yueh-chi monarchy in Bactria and were pressing in the direction of the Kabul Valley. Internally also, the Parthian regime suffered from weakness inherited from its Saka predecessor. On some coins presenting the portrait and symbol of Gondophernes, we find the names of the governors Sapedena and Satavastra. "The style of the satraps is 'Great King, King of Kings' which is only one degree inferior to the loftiest title assumed by Gondophernes himself, *viz.*, 'Great King, Supreme. King of Kings.' Such a style can only mean that even in the regin of Gondophernes, the allegiance of the governors to the suzerain was becoming only nominal".

An early Christian tradition, interwoven with many marvellous details, relates how the Apostle St. Thomas converted the Indian king Gudnaphar and his brother Gad to Christianity shortly after the Crucifixion in A. D. 29 or 33. The date would suggest that Gudnaphar was no other than Gondophernes, and, accordingly, the first introduction of Christianity in India may be assigned to the reign of that monarch. But the truth of the story is doubted by many authorities.[54]

Coin-legends show that Abdagases, a nephew of Gondophernes, was associated with him in a junior capacity, probably as the viceroy of Seistan and Kandhar. But it was not Abdagases, but a ruler named Pacores, who succeeded to the Indo-Parthian throne on the death of the king sometime after 45 A. D. (c. 50 A. D.). The coin-types of Pacores associate him with Seistan while the find of some pieces at Taxila bearing his portrait and the symbol of Gondophernes with the legend of the *Strategos* Sasa shows that his sway extended to the Punjab. The only prince of undoubtedly Parthian origin to rule after him was Sanabares, but his authority seems to have been limited to the Seistan area, After Pacores (C. 55 A. D.), the Parthian dominions probably split up into smaller principalities and taking advantage of the situation the Kushanas who were already knocking at the gates of the country began their onslaught on India. The progress of

the invaders against the Parthians is clearly attested, besides other sources, by inscriptions discovered in the north-west. By 65 A. D., they had definitely captured the Kabul Valley and advanced upto the Panjtar region (Mahabana Range). Before 78 A. D., they had ousted the Parthians from Taxila and were in possession of the Punjab, if not of a substaintial part of the Gangetic Valley to the east. When the author of the Periplus visited the Indus delta, probably in c. 50-70 A. D., it was still subject to Parthian chiefs, but these were 'constantly driving each other out.' The quarrelsome princes did not retain their independence for long. They were soon swamped by the Kushana expansion under Wema Kadphises or Kanishka.

B. THE GANGES BASIN AND RAJPUTANA

The conditions in the Gangetic Valley and the adjoining regions on the decline of the empire were such as normally attend the disintegration of a great power. For a time Greek rule seems to have extended as far as the Jamuna and through Rajputana to Barygaza but eventually the foreigners had to retire from the extreme eastern parts of the Punjab and the southern regions. As the 'Magadhan' and Greel powers receded from there, a number of petty states rose ro fill th political vacuum in the Gangetic Valley and the adjacent areas an continued to flourish until most of them were suppressed by th Kushanas and the Saka rulers of Western India in the first century A. I For our knowledge of these we have to depend almost exclusively o coins, inscriptions supplying only stray bits of information here and ther

Numismatic testimony shows that one such state comprised tl territory of North Panchala (Rohilkhand), with its principal centre Ahichchhatra near Bareilly. The kings of Panchala, most of whc seem to have borne names ending in —mitra, issued a distinctive ser ofcoins known as 'Panchala coins' to archaeologists.[56] Thou these coins are sometimes found in other areas also, there is har any doubt that they circulated mainly in ancient Panchala. About same time or a little earlier, Kausambi (Kosam on the Jamuna, n Allahabad) also rose into prominence as the seat of a regional gove ment, probably comprising the Allahabad and Banda Distr of U. P. Curiously enough, most kings of Kausambi had also na ending in —mitra and some of them were connected with the cont

porary rulers of Panchala by matrimonial ties.[57] A third important centre of power during the period was Ayodhya in the Kosala country (modern Oudh) where two series of kings with names ending in -deva and —datta seem to have held away.[58] One of the chiefs, Dhanadeva, perhaps ruling at the close of the first century B. C. or the beginning of the next century, is described in an inscription discovered at Ayodhya as 'the sixth descendant of senapati Pushyamitra, the performer of two Asvamedhas.' In the holy city of Mathura Greek rule was replaced by that of a dynasty of Hindu rulers whose coins have been recovered in large numbers. These include kings Gomitra, Brahmamitra, Purushadatta, Kamadatta and a few others. About the beginning of the Christian era, Mathura was captured by the Sakas and appears to have been held by them until it passed under the Kushanas. Coins also reveal the existence of some kings of Almora (Kumaun) and possibly Kanauj in the post-Sunga pre-Kushana epoch.

The central and lower tracts of the Gangetic Valley also apparently displayed a spectacle similar to that of U. P. A reference occurring in the celebrated Hathigumpha Inscription shows that about the close of the first century B. C. a king named Brihaspatimitra (or Brihatsvatimitra) was ruling in Magadha (Magadhanam Raja), with capital probably at Rajagriha. He had to face a great invasion of his realm by Kharavela, the warlike lord of Kalinga, who defeated him and compelled him to 'bow down to his feet.' Kharavela is said to have stormed the fortress of Gorathagiri in the Barabar Hill (near Gaya) and sacked the town of Rajagriha. The conqueror collected a large booty from Magadha and Anga and also took away certain Jaina images brought from Kalinga by Nandaraja, i. e., probably Mahapadma Nanda, three centuries earlier. His invasion, however, was obviously in the nature of a mere raid and led to no permanent conquests in the Gangetic basin. Brihaspatimitra appears to have belonged to the same family as Raja Brahmamitra and Raja Indragnimitra mentioned in old Brahmi votive inscriptions at Bodhgaya.

While the new states of the Gangetic Valley were mostly monarchical, those founded on the ruins of the Magadhan and Greek powers to the west and north-west of it were, in the majority

of cases, tribal republics though the monarchical element was now slowly gaining ground in these also. The best known of these are those of the Yaudheyas, Malavas and Arjunayanas. The main centre of the Yaudhayas appears to have been Eastern Punjab, but the distribution of their coins would suggest that their territory at one time comprised parts of Western U. P. and Northern Rajputana also. On some of their early coins, we get the legend *Babudbanaks Yaudbeyanam* (*i.e.*' of the Yaudheyas of Bahudhanyaka). Bahudhanyaka was probably their principal seat at this period and has been identified by some with Rohtaka where moulds of such coins have been found. The tutelary deity of the Yaudheyas was Skanda or Kumara (Karttikeya), the commander of the gods. The Malavas were an ancient people who lived in the Punjab at the time of Alexander's invasion. Gradually they moved to the south, perhaps due to the pressure of the Greeks or Sakas, and settled in the Jaipur-Udaipur region of Rajputana. In the first century B. C., they started issuing coins some of which bear the legend '*Malavanam jayab*' (Victory to the Malavas). A similar legend appears on the coins of the Arjunayanas also who were neighbours of the Malavas and the Yaudheyas and are generally placed in the Agra-Jaipur area. Among the other tribal states that flourished in Rajputana and S. E. Punjab before the coming of the Kushanas, mention may be made of those of the Sibis who occupied the region about Chittor and had their capital at the town of Madhyamika (Nagari near Chittor), the Audumbaras who inhabited the upper reaches of the Sutlaj and Beas, the Kunindas of the Sivalik Hills, the Kulutas of the Kullu Valley and the Trigarttas of the Jalandhar area. All these are supposed to have risen to independence on the decline of the Indo-Greeks in the first century B. C.

C. THE FOUNDATION OF THE ANDHRA-SATAVAHANA EMPIRE IN THE DECCAN

For a period of about 200 years after Asoka, the history of India south of the Vindhyas is wrapped up in darkness. As suggested above, the Magadhan empire probably began to withdraw from there soon after the death of that great monarch and before the end of the Maurya dynasty the frontier seems to have been rolled back to the neighbourhood of Vidarbha (Berar) in the north. After this, we have very little information about the political condition of the south upto about the close of the first century B. C. Inscrip-

tions found at Bhattiprolu in the Krishna district show that within a few decades of the passing away of Asoka a new ruling dynasty was founded in the Andhra country to which belonged Rajan Kuberaka and his father S—.; but these are mere names to us. In the extreme south of the peninsula, the Cholas, Pandyas and Cheras who had retained their independence even in the heyday of Mauryan glory, no doubt continued to flourish but for want of adequate sources it is impossible to trace their vicissitudes in any considerable or definite details. It is only at the end of the first century B. C. and the commencement of the next century that we find ourselves on somewhat firmer ground in respect of the south. Two notable attempts were made at this period to found empires in the northern part of the region and restore some amount of political unity to it. For a time the Chedi or Mahameghavahana dynasty of Kalinga rose high in the political firmament under its great ruler Kharavela but the meteoric career of the latter failed to lead to any permanent results. The glory of the Chedis perished with him. About the same time, however, the Satavahanas of Pratishthana (N. W. Deccan) also forged ahead of the contemporary powers and made their mark by uniting parts of the Maratha country and Central India under their command. Thus established, the Satavahana power lasted with varying fortunes for about three centuries and played an important role in the politics of the country.

The founder of the Satavahana dynasty was Simuka whose name has been misspelt as Sisuka, Sindhuka, Sipraka or Chismaka in the Puranas.[59] The Purnas describe him as a person belonging to the Andhra race (*Andhrajatiya*) and his family as *Andhra*. This racial name is conspicuous by its absence in the records of the dynasty which uniformly use the appellation *Satavahanavamsa* or *Satavahanakula*. Some scholars regard the Puranic designation as a mistake due to the confusion of tradition and contend that 'the name Andhra came to be applied to the kings in later times when they lost their northern possessions and became a purely Andhra power, governing the territory at the mouth of the river Krishna.'[60] But the discrepancy between the Puranic and epigraphic testimony on the point is probably only apparent. It is not improbable that Satavahana was the name of the family while Andhra denotes the race or tribe to which it belonged. The Andhras

were a non-Aryan people mentioned in an old Brahmanical text, the Aitareya Brahmana, as a *Dasyu* tribe living on the fringes of the Aryan territory in India. With the gradual southward expansion of the Aryans, some of them imbibed Aryan culture to a considerable extent and the particular family of the Satavahanas seems to have claimed the social status of Brahmanas, perhaps due to the admixture of Brahmana blood. Some kings of the family are known to have been upholders of the Brahmanical sacrificial religion and one of the later princes is clearly described as a 'unique Brahmana' in an epigraph.

The question of the date of Simuka, like that of his origin, is a debated one. He has been placed as early as c. 230 B. C. by some historians and his rise has been regarded as the result of a successful revolt against the Mauryas. It is difficult to see how this view can be reconciled with the clear statement in the Puranas that Simuka overpowered the last Kanvayana, Susarman, who flourished long after the disappearance of Maurya power. The Puranic indications suggest a date about 27 B. C. for the downfall of the Kanvas and the founder of the Andhra-Satavahana dynasty may accordingly be placed in the second half of the first century B.C. (c.50-25B.C.),[58] a conclusion that seems to accord well with other evidences. The epithet *bhritya* (servant) applied to him in some of the Puranas probably signifies that he was at first a feudatory of, or a high official under, the Kanvas but subsequently turned against his masters and overthrew them. The Puranas tell us that he also destroyed 'whatever still remained, of the power of the Sungas, and acquired the 'earth'. Some Sunga chiefs had apparentely survived the *coup d'etat* of Vasudeva and felt the steel of Simuka. The 'earth' which he acquired by his victories over the Kanvas and Sungas seems to have comprised parts of Central India only, possibly the region round Vidisa, the seat of the later Sunga and Kanva governments. As indicated elsewhere, the nominal sovereignty of the Kanvas was *probably* still acknowledged in some parts of the Gangetic Valley when they were humbled by the Satavahanas, but neith er Simuka nor his successors appear to have had anything to do with the

Gangetic tract. A theory making them sovereign over Magadha and other parts of North India is apparently a mistaken one.

All Puranas are agreed that Simuka ruled for 23 years and was followed on the throne by his brother Krishna. This prince is identified with 'Kanha,*raja* of the Sadavahanakula' mentioned in an inscription found at Nasik. His reign may be placed approximately during the period 25-15 B. C.

Some scholars locate the early seat of the power of the Andhra-Satavahanas in the Andhra country (lower Godavari and Krishna valleys). This necessitates the conclusion that by the end of the reign of Krishna they had built up a mighty empire stretching across the peninsula and including the western part of the Decean. This is undoubtedly an erroneous view of Satavahana history, there being no proof that the Satavahanas wielded any authority in the Andhra country or the adjoining areas before the second century A. D. Whatever the extent of the Satavahana kingdom under simuka and Krishna, they did not rule in Eastern Deccan.

With the reign of Satakarni I, the third king of the dynasty who married Nayanika, daughter of Maharathi Tranakayiro Kalalya of the Amgiya (?) family, the Satavahanas definitely emerge as a great power of the south, and are seen to assume the proud title of 'Lords of Dakshinapatha.' How much of his territories and importance he inherited from his predecessors cannot be ascertained at present, but the eminence of his position in the Deccan is attested by epigraphic, numismatic and literary evidences. The title *Dakshinapathapati* applied to him in the Naneghat (Poona District) Inscription of his wife proves his hold over the greater part of Maharashtra, if not the whole of it. Towards the east his rule seems to have extended considerably beyond the frontiers of Maharashtra as a reference in the Hathigumpha Inscription is generally interpreted to mean that the Satavahana kingdom was contiguous to that of Kharavela of Kalinga. In the opinion of most scholars Satakarni is identical with 'elder Saraganus', mentioned in the *Periplus* as a monarch under whom the town of Calliena (Kalyana in Aparanta or North Konkan, near Bombay) became a lawful emporium for foreign ships. He is also supposed to be the author of the coins bearing the legend 'of the illustrious king Sata' that evidently circulated in Malwa (both eastern and western). Several writers identify him with 'Rajan Sri Satakarni' named in a Sanchi Inscription but this is palaeographically somewhat doubtful. He thus ruled over fairly extensive dominions including Maharashtra and the neighbouring areas to the east, North Konkan and Malwa. 'Thus arose the first great empire in the Godavri valley which rivalled in extent and power the Sunga empire in the Ganges valley and the Greek empire in the land of the Five

Rivers'. Satakarni, apparently ruling from the city of Pratishthai (modern Paithan in the Aurangabad District, Hyderabad), signalis the acquisition of the new dignity by his house by celebrating tw Asvamedha sacrifices besides a host of other Vedic rites which be eloquent testimony to his status and influence.

The rise of Kharavela in Kalinga was probably an indire challenge to the Satavahanas But the ephemeral glory of the Chec made no impression on the growing might of the Pratishthana Empir On the death of Satakarni (c. 5. A. D.), queen Nayanika acted as rege for some time during the minority of her sons Sakti-Sri and Veda-S Then ensues a period of about a century when the dearth of adequa sources makes it difficult to follow the vicissitudes of the Satavahan clearly. The Puranas assign a number of princes to this period. A fe of them are known from other sources also, but most of them do nc appear to have belonged to the main stem of the family with i centre in Maharashtra. Thus, Apilaka, known from a solitary copp coin of his, probably belonged to a junior branch ruling i Madhya Pradesh while Kuntala-Satakarni and Hala were probabl related to another branch holding sway over the Kanarese country It appears that though the Satavahanas could not maintain th unity of their rule after Satakarni I, cadets of the family succeede in carrying its power and influence even to regions which were not included in his kingdom. The main branch itself seems to have retained the dominions of Satakarni more or less intact for some time. The Puranas mention a prince, also named Satakarni, as the immediate or alternate successor of Satakarni I, and many writers identify him with Rajan Sri Satakarni of the Sanchi Inscription mentioned above. The identification, if correct, would show that the Satavahanas retained hold of the northernmost districts of the empire of Satakarni. Referring probably to the period about 50-70 A. D. the Periplus tells us that the city of Calliena (Kalyana) was in the possession of Sandares who is, in all probability, no other than Sundara Satakarni, one of the successors of Satakarni in the Puranic lists and we may hold that Satavahana rule had not receded from Aparanta upto after the middle of the first century. But dark clouds were already gathering when the anonymous author of the Periplus wrote his account. The navigator notes that the port of Calliena was much obstructed at the time and Greek ships chancing to land there ran the

sk of being seized and taken to Barygaza under guard. He probably means to say that frequent plundering expeditions starting from arygaza (Broach) harassed Calliena and caused a state of general security there. Elsewhere he tells us. 'Beyond the gulf of Baraca probably Dvarka) is that of Barygaza and the coast of the country of riaca (Lata or Gujrat) which is the beginning of the kingdom of Mambarus and of all India. That part of it lying inland and adjoining Scythia is called Abria and the coast is called Syastrene (Surashtra)'. t would appear from this that the Barygaza region, the base of the predatory raids threatening the Satavahana port of Calliena, was in the possession of Mambarus whose dominions included Gujrat, Kathiawar and parts of Rajputana. His capital was Min-nagara and it is generally thought that he was a Scythian. A strong Saka kingdom had thus been established in the neighbourhood of the Satavahanas and already there was a state of active hostility between the two powers. The Sakas had no doubt gradually spread their power to the south from their base in Sind.The raids of Mambarus probably could not make much impression on the Satavahanas, but only a little later, about the close of the first and the beginning of the second century, the Saka pressure became acute and the Satavahanas had to enter into a mortal combat with the foreigners that seems to have engrossed their attention for a century.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. PHAI[6], p. 362

2. Several coins bearing the name Euthydemus were found in the bed of the Indus at Attock in 1840. But, 'it is a serious flaw in Cunningham's reasoning that he did not distinguish between the coins of Euthydemus I and those of the grandson who bore the same name'.

3. PHAI[6], p. 387

4. Speaking of the regions about Gujrat and Kathiawar, the author of the Periplus says that even upto his time there remained in these places signs of Alexander's expedition 'such as ancient shrines, walls of forts and great wells.' He is propably confounding the success of the Bactrians with that of Alexander.

5. Tarn, The Greeks in Bactria and India, 2nd Ed., pp. 152-4.

6. Sir John Marshall points out that the portrait of Menander on some of his coins shows a youngish face. It does not seem probable that he would be put in charge of the great campaign at that comparatively immature age. Demetrius himself was only about 55 at the time.

7. Tarn, op. cit.

8. This would follow from the observation of Strabo, based on the testimony of Apollodorus, that Menender had to cross the Beas for conquests in the east.

9. Mbh., I., 139, 12-23.

10. See above, n. 2.

11. The attribution, however, is challenged by some.

12. Tarn, pp. 76-78.

13. Prof. Rapson points out that certain copper coins of Menander bear such a close resemblance to the issues of Eucratides that the two must be referred not only to the same general period but also to the same region which must have passed from one monarch to the other. CHI, I, Ind. Reprint, p. 496. It is important to remember that Apollodotus and Menander are the only Indo-Greek princes whose coins are known to have circulated in Barygaza and who probably ruled there. As Apollodotus was certainly a contemporary of Demetrius and Eucratides, it would follow that Menander also cannot be far removed from them. The possibility of Menander's rule in Bactria, suggested by the discovery of the tetradrachm referred to above, and in the Kabul Valley also seems to point to a period before the House of Encratides had fully consolidated its position there. The testimony of the Shinkot steatite casket inscriptions does not necessarily disprove this view. It is not fully established that Vijayamitra who re-established the relics is identical with the grandfather of Aspavarman, a feudatory of Azes II (c. 20 A.D.). Even if the identification be regarded as certain the period which elapsed between the first establishment of the relics by Viyakamitra in the reign of Menander and the reburial by Vijayamitra cannot be definitely fixed. The vague Buddhist tradition that king Milinda (Menander) flourished five hundred years after the Parinirvana of the Buddha (483 B.C.) cannot be made the basis of any accurate calculations.

14. CHI, I, Ind. Reprint., pp. 496-97. French scholars, including Pelliot, Grousset and Levi, are inclined towards Alexandria in Egypt, basing their conclusion mainly on the statement in the Chinese version of the Milindapanha which represents Milinda as the prince of a country near the sea and gives the distance of Alasanda from Sakala (Sialkot) as 2000 yojanas instead of the 200 of the Pali Milinda. Contra

Tarn, pp. 420-1. 'Where does anyone propose to find, near Alexandria in Egypt, about 210-200 B.C., a country on the sea ruled by a Greek dynasty?'

15. The arguments in support of this view are given in CHI, I, Indian Reprint, p. 498.

16. Tarn thinks that Menander never ruled in Kapisa-Paropamisadae. But most writers seem to be of the opposite opinion.

17. Some writers, mostly European, think that Menander was never actually converted to Buddhism. But, as pointed out by Dr. K. P. Jayaswal, it is impossible to believe that the Milindapanho could have been foisted on him if he was not a follower of the faith. Under the name Milindra, Menander seems to have been known as a Buddhist to Kshemendra who refers to a great stupa built by the king in his Avadanakalpalata. Taranath mentions king Minara of the Tukharadesa who was converted by the venerable Dhitika. He is probably no other than Menander. A Siamese religious legend connects the Emerald Buddha with Milinda and Nagasena. The very information supplied by Plutarch that on the death of Menander people raised stupas over his ashes strongly suggests that he was a Buddhist. His partiality for Buddhism is reflected in his coins also. On some of these we get the figure of a wheel which probably represents the Dharmachakra. The palm-branch and the elephant occurring on others have a Buddhist significance while the title 'Diakou' (with its Kharoshthi equivalent dhramika) that the king assumes on a few pieces is also said to be indicative of Buddhist leanings. The conjunction of the wheel with the title has even been taken by some to mean that, like Asoka, Menander was eager to present himself to his subjects in the role of the traditional Spiritual Emperor, the 'Chakravarti Dharmiko Dharmaraja. The reference to Milinda becoming a monk under the influence of Nagasena occurs in the last part of the Milindapanho which is regarded as a later addition by many authorities. But the Buddhist faith of Milinda is borne out by an earlier passage also at the end of the third chapter which is accepted on all hands as a part of the original work. Here we find Milinda declaring that he would like to take orders but was prevented from doing so by the large number of his enemies. It is obvious that the king who expressed such a desire could not have failed to be converted to Buddhism as a lay-devotee.

18. These tribes have issued coins some of which are assigned to the first century B.C.

19. Some of these, known from coins, are Dionysius, Zoilus, Apollophanes, Polyxenus, Apollodotus II, Nicias and Hippostratus. Some of these, however, may have been sub-kings under the Stratos.

20. Timarchus, the satrap of Babylon, who revolted against the Seleucid emperor in 162 B.C., struck money in imitation of the Indian coinage of Eucratides.

21. CHI, I, Indian Reprint, p. 512.

22. There is some difference of opinion about the identity of the assassin. Cunningham believed that he was probably Apollodotus II while Tarn thinks that Eucratides was killed by a son of Demetrius. A recent writer suggests the name of Plato, who is known from a solitary coin.

23. The recently discovered Kunduz hoard of coins reveals that some of the princes who flourished after Heliocles minted coins of the Attic weight standard, bearing legends in Greek only. These were probably meant for circulation to the north of the Hindukush, in a part of the kingdom of Bactria which was still held by the Greeks after the major portion had been conquered by the nomads. See, JNSI, XVII, Part I, pp. 37-52.

24. This point is emphasized by Dr. Mrs. J. E. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw in The Scythian Period.

25. 'Antialcidas' relation with Heliocles, son of Eucratides, is indicated by the common coin-type—bust of the king on the obverse and elephant on the reverse—with which Heliocles restruck the coins of Agathocleia and Strato I' (AIU., p. 116). Gardner points out that the portrait of Antialcidas bears a striking resemblance to that of Heliocles and so it is not improbable that the former was a son of the latter. It may, however, be remembered that on some coins the name of Antialcidas is found associated with that of a senior ruler called Lysias. It may be that Lysias intervened between Heliocles and Antialcidas.

26. The coin-types of Antialcidas include, among others, 'City Goddess and the Indian Bull', and 'Pilei of the Dioscuri.' The former is supposed by some to be the special type of Pushkalavati (W. Gandhara) and the latter of Takshasila. But the attribution cannot he regarded as certain and has been challenged by others. The inclusion of a part of Bactria in the dominions of Antialcidas may be inferred from his 'Bactrian' issues. The other types identified are 'Victory' as that of Nicaea and 'Ox-Head' as that of Bucephala on the Jhelum.

27. Archebius is one of the post-Heliocles princes who struck 'Bactrian' coins. His coinage also includes the type 'Pilei of the Dioscuri.'

28. JNSI, XVII, Part I, pp. 43-44.

29. Herzfeld, MASI, No. 34, p. 3. The Hamdan Gold Tablet Inscriptions of Darius give a clue to the early home of the Sakas by referring to them as 'Para-Sugdam', i.e., living beyond Sogdiana.

30. Thomas in JRAS, 1906. Contra Herzfeld.

31. Mc Govern, Central Asian Empires, p. 156.

32. Tarn, The Greeks in Bactria and India, p. 262.

33. Above.

34. Konow, Corpus. II, p. IVIII.

35. Above.

36. Infra.

37. There is a good deal of difference of opinion among scholars about the early movements of the Sakas and the route they followed into India. According to some, whose theory now seems to be generally discarded (though Prof. P. C. Bagachi has recently tried to revive it, cf. his Presidential Address to the Indian History Congress, Aligarh, 1945), Kipin of the Chinese writers denotes Kashmir and the Sakas entered India via Kashmir and the Pamirs direct from their northern home in the Jaxartes region. But the objection of Cunningham and Rapson that the view 'involves a physical impossibility' still remains unanswered. 'The geographical difficulties of this region are such that an invasion from this direction of tribal hordes or armies sufficiently powerful to overwhelm the Yavana kingdoms and to conquer the whole of the N. W. Frontier Province and the Punjab is inconceivable' (CHI, I, Indian Reprint, p. 508). It may also be pointed out that there is little archaeological evidence for the Saka occupation of Kashmir. It seems almost certain that 'Kipin' of the Chinese texts stands for Kapisa-Kafiristan in the Upper Kabul Valley (Corpus, II, p. ix). But it is difficult to accept the implication that after being dislodged from Bactria, the Sakas crossed the Hindukush and captured the Kabul Valley. As pointed out in the text, the Greeks held the Kabul Valley and some parts of Southern Bactria at least upto c. 100 B. C. if not later still. Another argument against such an assumption is that the earliest known Saka chiefs of India, Maues, Azes I and others, are not definitely known to have ruled in the upper Kabul region (above, pp. 325-8). Their coins are extremely rare here, though other foreign rulers belonging to Greek, Parthian and Kushana families are abundantly represented. As the evidence stands at present, it seems impossible to deny the contention of Thomas, Rapson, Cunningham, Altekar and most others that the Sakas entered Indian from Eastern Iran via Southern Afghanistan and Baluchistan.

38. Arachosia and Sind (or at least a part of it) were included in the Parthian Empire since the days of Mithradates I. Above, p. 315. In the Kalkacharyakathanaka, the name 'Saga-gula' (the Saka country) seems to be applied to the lower Indus region. Dionysus Perigeta speaks of the 'Southern Scythians' as settled on the Indus.

39. The beginning of the era, according to Prof. Rapson, would fall about 150

B.C. 'It may possibly mark the establishment of the new kingdom in Seistan after its incorporation into the Parthian empire by Mithradates I, in c. 150 B. C.' W. W. Tarn shifts the period a few years earlier, to about 155 B. C. J. E. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw thinks that the era probably began in 129 B. C. to commemorate the nomad conquest of Bactria. Some recent writers have proposed to identify the era of the Taxila Plate with the Vikrama Samvat of 58 B.C. and, accordingly, have assigned Maues to the period about 20 A. D. But this accords ill with the fact that Azes II, the third in succession from Maues, was a contemporary of the Parthian Gondophernes who began his rule in 19 A.D. As the two predecessors of Azes II, Azilises and Azes I apparently had quite long reigns, the end of the reign of Maues himself is obviously to be placed considerably earlier than 20 A.D. Attention may also be drawn to the fact that at the time when the Taxila Plate Inscription was engraved the Kshatrapa Liaka Kusulaka was the subordinate ruler of Chuksha (near Taxila) under Maues and his son Patika was apparently still only a young person, without any official titles. Later Patika became a Mahakshatrapa and in that capacity was a contemporary of the Mahakshatrapa Ranjuvula of Mathura. The latter was succeeded by his son Sondasa who became a Mahakshatrapa in or before 15 A. D. as is evident from the Mathura Votive Tablet Inscription of his time. The chronology of the Kshatrapas of Mathura also suggests that the date of Maues probably cannot be brought down as low as 20 A. D. If, as is possible, the Saka chief is mentioned in the Maira inscription of the year 58, then the Taxila Copper Plate Inscription must be referred to the later rather than the earlier part of his reign. This would mean that the era in question began about 130-125 B. C. rather than about 155-150 B. C. as supposed by Tarn and Rapson. The theory of these scholars would place Liaka about 80-70 B. C. which seems unlikely in view of the fact that his son Patika was a Mahakshatrapa about the beginning of the Christian era.

40. Dr. Altekar bases his conclusion chiefly on the extremely rare 'Bow-in-Bowcase' type of Maues which is an almost exact copy of coins of the same type struck in the name of Arsaces Theos of Parthia. While the titles on the Arsaces coins are 'high-sounding, almost divine honorifics,' Maues is given only the subordinate epithet of 'King' on his issues of this type.

41. 'But as yet not a single coin of the king has been found either in Pushkalavati or the Kapisa regions, a fact which shows that he did not rule in these places'. S. C. Chattopadhyaya, The Sakas in India, p. 15. The statement of Dr. Chattopadhyaya is not strictly true for a few coins of Maues have been found in the Kabul Valley. See, JNSI, XVII, pt. II., p. 21, n. 9. But the number of these coins is too small to definitely indicate political authority.

42. Marshall (JRAS, 1947) draws attention to the fact that even in the Kalakacharyakathanaka the Sakas who conquered Kathiawar and Malwa are represented as rebels against the Shahanushahi.

43. Marshall thinks that after Maues there was a Greek revival in Taxila under Hermaeus. Marshall further opines that Vonones also extended his sway over India and ruled in Taxila where Spalahores and Spalagadames acted as his legatees. Contra S. C. Chattopadhyaya, The Sakas in India, p. 20.

44, JNSI, XVII, pt. II., p. 20.

45. The name of Azes, in the form Aja or Aya, seems to be connected with the era (which is generally accepted to be the Vikrama era) in the Kalawan Copper Plate Inscription and the Taxila Silver Scroll Inscription of the years 134 and 136 respectively. But it is not necessary to infer from this that Azes was the founder of the era. It is quite conceivable that his name came to be linked up with the era in the north-west as the was the first foreign ruler to use it in that region. According to some, however, 'Aja' and 'Aya' in the inscriptions have nothing to do, with the name Azes and are only variants of 'arya', an adjectival expression meant to qualify the month which is mentioned immediately afterwards.

46. Whitehead, in Catalogue of Coins in the Punjab Museum.

47. Marshall informs us that the coins which Smith assigns to Azes II on grounds of style and fabric are found generally nearer the surface at Taxila than those of Azes I (JRAS, 1914, p. 979).

48. JRAS, 1947, p. 26 ; Taxila, I, p. 52.

49. JNSI, XVII, pt. II, p. 20 '......and furthermore I think it can be shown that the evidence of coin-finds does not in fact lend any support to the view that the Azes dynasty controlled Kapisa.' It is pointed out that some coins of Azes were obtained by Masson at Begram ; but they are very few in number.

50. JNSI, XVII, pt. II., p. 19.

51. There was probably a Parthian revival after Spalirises and Azes in these regions and 'Saka' rule was overthrown.

52. CHI, I, Indian Reprint., p. 524.

53. E. Herzfeld, Sakastan, Arch. Mitt. ans Iran, Band IV, 1932, p. 101, n. 1.

54. See infra.

55. The Panchala rulers known so far from coins and inscriptions are : Bhadraghosha, Suryamitra, Phalgunimitra, Bhumimitra, Agnimitra, Bhanumitra, Vishnumitra, Jayamitra, Indramitra, Dhruvamitra, Brihaspatimitra (or Brihatsvatimitra, Jayagupta, Damagupta, Vangapala, Prajapatimitra, Varunamitra, Yajnapala, Vasusena, Visvapala and Rudragupta. It is not

improbable that some of these kings ruled simultaneously over small districts of Panchala and the possibility that some were allowed to issue coins in a subordinate capacity by the Kushana emperors also cannot be ruled out. One of the most interesting discussions of the recent years in numismatic circles centres round the question if some of these kings may be identified with the successors of Pushyamitra mentioned in the Puranas. Scholars like Dr. K. P. Jayaswal and H. C. Raychaudhuri are inclined to hold that Agnimitra of the Panchala coins was probably identical with the son of Pushyamitra and Bhumimitra with the Kanva king of the same name while Bhadraghosha may be the complete form of the name of the king who is mentioned simply as Ghosha in the Puranas. But the localised circulation of the coins in question seems to preclude such a view. Cunningham, Dr. Altekar and others are probably right in thinking that these kings had nothing to do with the imperial 'Sunga' and Kanva families, and belong to the local dynasty or dynasties of North Panchala.

The question of the date of the beginning of the 'Panchala series' of coins is also a debated one. One authority (Allan in BMC) places it as early as 200 B. C. and believes that the local dynasty of Panchala came into existence even before the revolt of Pushyamitra. But such a high date does not appear very probable. Dr. D. C Sircar rightly points out that since 'the fashion of mentioning the name of the ruling authority in the coin-legends was inspired and popularised in India by foreign kings beginning with the Indo-Greeks, most of the coins bearing such legends should preferably be assigned to a date later than the early decades of the second century B.C.' (AIU, p. 159). The same authority also argues that, paleographically, 'even the earliest of the inscribed coins do not appear to be earlier than the Besnagar inscription of the end of the second century B. C.' It appears almost certain that the Panchala dynasty started its rule only after Pushyamitra, presumably even after c. 100 B.C. when the authority of the Magadhan empire began to decline rapidly.

56. Some of the Kausambi kings known from coins are Sudeva, Brihaspatimitra (or Brihatsvatimitra), Asvaghosha, Parvata, Agnimitra, Jyesthamitra, Devamitra, Prajapatimitra, Rajamitra, Rajanimitra, Varunamitra and Suramitra.

57. The known 'Deva' kings of Ayodhya are Dhanadeva, Visakhadeva, Muladeva and Vayudeva, The 'Datta' series is represented by Naradatta, Sivadatta and possibly also Praushthadatta.

58. Prof. Mirashi has drawn our attention to a coin with the legend 'Rano Sirî Sadavahanasa.' He argues that the author of the coin must have flourished considerably earlier than the time of Simuka as its paleography is 'almost Asokan', and so may be regarded as the progenitor of the family. But the high date for the coin is not accepted by others. It is

even held by some that Sadavahana (Satavahana) may have been simply an epithet of Simuka.

59. PHAI[6], pp. 412-13. Also, ABORI, 1918-19, p. 21.

60. For the early principality of the Satavahanas, see Appendix.

CHAPTER III

The Age of the Kushanas

A. THE RISE AND FALL OF THE KUSHANAS

The Kushanas, who supplanted the Indo-Parthians in the north-west and subsequently brought large parts of India proper under their control, were a section of the Ta (Great) Yueh-chi people whose migration from their original homeland to Ta-hia (Bactria) due to the pressure of the Hiung-nu and the Wu-sun has already been noticed.[1] The best authorities on the subject place their arrival in Ta-hia in c. 130 B. C. In 129 B. C., the celebrated envoy Chang-Kien, deputed by the Chinese emperor, paid a visit to them with a view to securing their alliance against the Hiung-nu, but they turned down the overtures on the ground that they were weary of fighting and trekking and wished to settle down to a peaceful life. They soon lost their nomadic habits and divided the country among five district-heads or chiefs (*hi-hous*), apparently representing the five constituent clans of the tribe, whose independent principalities were known as Hieou-mi, Chouang-mi, Kouei-chouang, Hi-tun and Tou-mi.[2] This state of fragmentation lasted for about a century and somewhat more when we have no further information about the Yueh-chi. At the end of that period, there arose a movement for unification vigorously championed by the Kouei-chouang (Kushana) *hi-hou* whose name is given as Kieou-tsieou-kio. "He attacked and subjugated the four other *hi-hous* and called himself *wang* (king)." Bactria thus became the seat of a strong centralised Kushana (Yueh-chi) government and a source of danger to the Indo-Parthians across the Hindukush.

a. FOUNDATION OF THE EMPIRE

Kieou-tsieou-kio is doubtless identical with Kujula Kadphises (usually designated as Kadphises I), the earliest Kushana ruler known from coins struck in the country to the south of the Hindukush. His triumph over the four rival *hi-hous* leading to the foundation of the united Kushana kingdom probably took place before 2 B. C. as Chinese sources testify to the existence of the office of

'*wang*' among the Yueh-chi at that date.[3] The amalgamation of the *hi-hous* became the starting point of a political development which culminated in the Kushanas becoming one of the major powers of the world. The ground for further expansion was prepared by Kujula himself by his conquests in the Kabul Valley. Having consolidated his position in Bactria, he turned his eyes to the south and commenced hostilities against the Indo-Parthians who at this time held the Punjab, Sind and Afghanistan in their power. As related already, the predatory raids of the Kushanas seem to have caused a good deal of worry to Gondophernes (Phraotes). The invaders probably could not make much headway against the Parthins so long the great monarch was alive but his death in c. 50 A. D. and the subsequent division of the Indo-Parthian kingdom created a favourable situation which the ambitious chief of the Kushanas exploited fully. We read in the *Hou han shu* (Annals of the Later Han dynasty) that he invaded Ngan-si (Parthia, which in this case can mean only the Indo-Parthian dominions), 'took possession of the territories of Kao-fu (Kabul), Po-ta (not identified but evidently not far from Kabul) and Kipin (Kafiristan) and made himself complete master of these.' The Kushana banner was thus planted in the Kabul Valley (C. 55 A. D.) and the road to India lay open.

The victories of Kujula in Bactria and Afghanistan greatly improved the status of the Kushanas. On his later coins we find the king making use of dignified royal epithets like '*Maharaja Rajatiraja*' in contrast with the simple title '*Yavuga*' (chief) occurring on his earlier issues. But he was now apparently at the fag-end of his career—he had begun his active political life before the close of the previous century—and must have died soon afterwards (c. 55 A. D.) at the ripe old age of 'more than eighty.' The association of his name on the reverse of some coins with that of the Indo-Greek king Hermaeus on the obverse has led some writers to conclude that he was at first a subordinate ally of the Greek monarch and later succeeded to his possessions in the Kabul Valley. This view is now rejected by most scholars who are inclined to hold that the coins in question are either a 'propaganda currency' or that the Kushana chief at first adopted the practice, prevalent in the Kabul Valley for a long time before him, of putting the name of Harmaeus on coins. The occurrence of the title '*Sachadbramathita*' (Steadfast in the True Religion) on some of his coins suggests

that Kujula professed the Buddhist religion and makes his identification with the Yueh-chi 'wang' who communicated certain Buddhist scriptures to China in 2 B. C. a high probability. The Indianisation of the Kushanas had already begun.

The successor of Kujula was his son Wema, Vima or Ooemo Kadphises (Kadphises II) whom the Chinese writers call Yen-Kao-tchen. Wema furthered the work of his father and extended the Kushana rule into India proper from his base in Bactria and Afghanistan. Accoording to the Annals of the Later Han Dynasty, he 'in his turn conquered Tien-chu (India) and appointed a chief to govern it. From this time the Yueh-chi became extremely powerful. All the other countries designated them Kushanas but the Han retained the old name and called them Ta Yueh-chi.' The exact limits of 'India' conquered by Wema are not known. It is argued by some that the Chinese description of Tien-chu as 'a great warm country on a great river, where the manners of the people resembled those of the Hiung-nu,' suggests the Indus region where a strong Central Asian element had already been introduced by the Saka-Parthians.[5] But it may be pointed out here that the early Chinese notions about 'India' were extremely vague and confused. Numismatists point out that the coins of Wema occur in sufficiently large numbers as far east as Mathura and are also found in U.P. and Bihar. In recent years, a coin-hoard, consisting mainly of Kushana copper coins and including some of Wema, has been acquired from Buxar in Bihar. It will, therefore, perhaps not be unreasonable to infer that 'India' annexed by Wema comprised not only the Indus tract but also U.P. and parts of Bihar. This conclusion receives considerable strength from the fact that inscriptions belonging to the very first years (years 2 and 3) of the reign of Kanishka, probably his immediate successor, have been found at Kausambi (near Allahabad and Sarnath (near Banaras). It appears that Wema was the real founder of Kushana supremacy in North India and his onslaught overthrew not only the Parthians in the north-west but also the numerous local dynasties of U. P. and Bihar which had been ruling there since the Sunga-Kanva days. But the evidence is really not adequate enough to enable us to be definite on the point. Sten Konow reads the name of Wema (Uvima Kavthisa) in a Khalasate (Laddakh) Inscription. This would mean that the king reduced Kashmir also, but the reading is doubtful. An important event in Wema's invasion of India seems to have been the sack of the Parthian royal city at

Sirkap (Taxila) which never afterwards regained its former glory and splendour. An inscription discovered at Panjtar (Peshawar District) and dated in the year 122 (=64 A. D.) seems to be reminiscent of the Kushana advance towards India under him. The epigraph invokes the authority of a '*Kushana Maharaja*' whose personal name is not given but he is almost certainly no other than Wema.[6]

Kadphises II minted money in gold and also issued a large number of copper or bronze coins. As gold coins were almost, if not wholly, unknown in India before this, it is clear that their sudden appearance in sufficient numbers indicates a new source of economic prosperity. It has rightly been pointed out that this must have been the vast improvement brought about in the commercial intercourse between China and the Roman Empire and India due to the conquests of Kujula and Wema. The Kushanas now 'controlled the three main stretches of the great Silk Road' and 'Roman gold began to pour into the country in payment for silk, spices and gems,' enabling the Kushanas and their successors to issue a profusion of gold coins. The coins of Wema are bilingual. On the reverse of these is often found a representation of the god Siva with the Kharoshthi legend 'the Great King, the King of Kings, lord of the whole world, the Mahesvara, the Defender.' The legend shows that the personal religion of Wema was Saivism as against the Buddhist faith of his father and that by his extensive victories in India he had acquired a higher political status than the latter. He was also probably the author of the large number of coins, occurring extensively in the Punjab and Afghanistan, which do not give the king's name but bear only the corrupt Greek legend, 'Basileos Basileon Soter Megas' (with the Kharoshthi equivalent *Maharajasa rajatirajasa mahatasa tratarasaa*) and a particular symbol.[7]

b. KANISHKA

The Chinese annals do not tell us the name of the successor of Wema. But the sequence of evidence brought to light during the archaeological excavations at Taxila makes it clear that Kanishka (I) ascended the throne not long, if not immediately, after him. Sir John Marshall and others do not rule out the possibility of a 'gap of time' between the two kings. Such a 'gap', even if we are justiified in assuming it, could hardly have been of any considerable duration, and for all practical purposes we many regard Kanishka as the immediate successor of Wema. The coins of both Kanishka

and Vima Kadphises have been found together at several places (e.g.,) Benares, Gopalpur *stupa* in Gorakhpur, Begram near Kabul) and they often display in the field the same four-pronged symbol and agree accurately in weight and fineness, besides exhibiting a close relationship in the obverse devices.'[9] Among the numerous finds of Kushana coins and inscriptions in Northern and North-Western India there is represented no king who may be definitely said to have intervened between Wema and Kanishka. The two kings must therefore have been very close in time to each other and indeed the one may have succeeded the other. The relationship between them is not clear. The discovery of a statue of Vamatakshama, possibly Wema, in the *devakula* of Huvishka (probably a brother or son of Kanishka) at Mathura may suggest that they were bound together by close ties of kinship. Curiously enough a Mathura record refers to the *pitamaha* (grandfather) of Huvishka as *Sacha-dharma-thita* or 'Steadfast in the True Religion.' This was a title assumed by Kujula Kadphises, but it is not possible to say at present if this has any bearing on the question of the connection of Kanishka with the Kadphises kings. Sten Konow and a few others are of opinion that Kanishka belonged to the Little Yueh-chi and entered India from Khotan (Chinese Turkistan) by a different way [10] but this is contradicted by the fact that a successor of Kanishka who flourished about 230 A. D. is definitely described in Chinese records as a Ta (Great) Yueh-chi.

The ascending series of dates in the inscriptions of Kanishka and his successors seems to suggest that a regnal reckoning beginning with the commencement of the former's reign was continued by the latter and thus assumed the shape of an era (*Samvat*).[11] As Wema Kadphises had succeeded an octogenarian, he could hardly have had a long reign of more than, say, 20 years' duration. It, therefore, appears highly probable that the era which began as the regnal dating of Kanishka is no other than the so-called Saka Era of the year 78 A. D. In other words, the accession of Kanishka I probably took place in 78 A. D., the initial year of the era which later acquired the name *Saka-Samvat* or *Saka-nripati-kala*. This view of the chronology of Kanishka seems to accord best with the known facts and the following reconstruction of the history of the Kushanas under him and his descendants is based on it. The question of his date, however, is still the centre of one of the most spirited discussions in

the field of Indological research and a more detailed treatment will be found in an appendix.

The new king of the Kushanas is the most distinguished of the early foreign princes of India and ranks as one of her great rulers. In Indian tradition his name is famous as that of a conqueror 'whose far-flung campaigns frightened the mass of his servants,' who had control over 'distant garrisons' and who was in command of the continent of Jambudvipa'. We have specific allusions to only one or two campaigns of his in India but it seems certain that he succeeded in carrying the frontiers of the Kushana kingdom considerably beyond the point at which Wema had left them. Wema may or may not have exercised sway over Kashmir, Sind and U.P., Kanishka certainly did. His rule in Kashmir is proved by the mention of his name among the rulers of that pleasant valley in the *Rajatrangini* and by a reference to a visit paid by him to a Buddhist saint in Kipin (Kashmir in this case) in two Indian texts translated into Chinese in 472 A. D.[13] From the lower Indus Valley comes an inscription of his time (11th year) from Sui Vihar near Multan and there are more than one epigraphic records in U. P. To the east of U.P. Kushana coins are fairly numerous in Bihar and the memory of a successful war of Kanishka on the local king of *Hoa-chu* (Pataliputra) has been preserved in Buddhist legend.[14] In the south, the sway of Kanishka extended to the Vindhyas, the geographical and traditional confine of North India ; a Kushana inscription bearing the date 22 of his era (—he himself reigned upto the year 23—) has been found at Sanchi near Bhopal. About this time Gujrat, Kathiawar and Rajputana were being ruled by the Scythic house of the Kshaharatas whose earliest known ruler, Bhumaka, appears to have been a contemporary of Kanishka. There are some indications that Bhumaka, and probably his successor Nahapana after him, were viceroys of the Kushanas whose dominions may thus have included the whole of Western India upto the Arabian Sea. But judgment on this last point must be suspended. The subordination of the Kshaharatas and their successors, the Karddamakas, to the Kushanas, though a high probability, is not regarded as a settled fact by many and it is too early to say whether or not the great struggle which these dynasties waged against the Satavahanas of the Deccan was on behalf of the Kushana emperors who wished to emulate the example of the Mauryas by reducing the south.[18]

of Hiuen Tsang, quoted above, refers. This view will gain in strength if V. Smith's opinion that the name of the Sangharama for the hostages in Kapisa was connected with Kashghar is correct..

'The Kharoshthi records discovered in Chinese Turkistan bear traces of Kushana rule in names like Kushansena and royal titles like Devaputra. The Kharoshthi language and the Prakrit script appear to have been introduced in these regions during the rule of the Kushanas'. The Kushana advent opened the floodgate by which Indian cultural influence flowed steadily into the north-eastern parts of Asia. But it seems that the Kushanas remained the dominant factor in Chinese Turkistan only for a short period of time. The Chinese chronicles aver that in c. 119 A. D. the Han began to 'resume the intercourse' with the western countries and their testimony would show that from about 125 A. D. the Chinese again had the upper hand in the Tarim basin. [20].

Things moved fast on the southern fringe of the empire also. Some time before 118 A. D., the Kshaharatas launched a great offensive against the Satavahanas and drove them out of Maharashtra and Aparanta (North Konkan). The Satavahanas, however, quickly recovered from the blow. In or shortly after 124-5 A. D., Gautamiputra Satakarni, a great king of the dynasty, overthrew the Kshaharatas and not only recovered Maharashtra and Aparanta, but also made himself master of many other regions. But the triumph of the Satavahanas proved to be short-lived and the political scene in the Deccan changed once again. The Karddamaka Kshatrapas, succeeding the defunct Kshaharatas, now took up the struggle and before 150 A. D. the wave of Satavahana expansion had been rolled back by Chashtna and Rudradaman. Most, if not all, of these stirring events occurred in the time of Huvishka and Kanishka II. But, as already stated, it is not possible to say if the Kushanas were directly concerned with them.

Huvishka retained the extensive empire of Kanishka I intact at least during the greater part of his reign An inscription of the year 51 (129 A. D.), discovered at Wardak near

Kabul, proves his hold on Afghanistan. Thomas thinks it possible that he, and not Wema Kadphises, is the king mentioned in the short donative epigraph found at Khalasate in Laddakh and the distribution of his coins and inscriptions indicates the inclusion of the Gangetic Valley in his dominions. Like Kanishka, he also issued a varied coinage with the figures of many Indian and foreign divinities on the reverse. He was probably a patron of Buddhism and a Mathura inscription refers to a vihara built by or named after him. According to the Rajatarangini, he founded a town called Hushkapura in Kashmir.

d. DECLINE OF THE KUSHANAS

Vasudeva I, the successor of Huvishka, whose known dates range from the year 67 (=145 A.D.) to the year 98 (=176 A. D.), was the last notable king of the Kushana dynasty. The glory of the Kushanas lasted only fot about a century after which it began to decline rapidly. The struggle against Parthia and China in the north and probably the Satavahanas in the south must have greatly weakened the foundations of the empire. Kushana rule in India was decidedly top-heavy. It had not succeeded in taking deep roots in the soil and an undercurrent of national resistance was constantly striking at its base. Consequently, its political structure soon began to show symptoms of disintegrating and the well known centrifugal tendencies of Indian history quickly rose to the surface.

The beginning of the end may be placed in the time of Vasudeva himself, if not earlier. Inscriptions discovered at Kausambi (near Allahabad) show that by c. 155 A. D. Kushana rule in that city had been replaced by that of a dynasty known as Magha. The last Kushana king represented in the Buxar hoard of coins, referred to above, is Huvishka. This may signify that under him or Vasudeva, the Kushanas lost Bihar and other eastern possessions. Mathura on the Jamuna, however, was still a Kushana stronghold; the inscriptions of Vasudeva are found in or near that city. The view that Bactria and Afghanistan too had slipped out of his control does not seem to be well founded.

Vey little of a definite nature is known about the history of the Kushanas after Vasudeva and only tentative conclusions can be given which may be modified by future discoveries. The next king was probably Kanishka III (c. 180-210 A. D.) and further trouble overtook the dynasty in his time [21]. His—coins he is known from coins only—are not found to the east of the Satlaj, a fact suggesting that the Kushanas could not retain possession of Mathura or any part of the U.P. The overthrow of their rule in the eastern districts was apparently due to the

successful revolt of the Yaudheyas, Nagas and the other tribes we now find rising into importance there. Towards the end of Kanishka III's life, Kushana dominions seem to have embraced only the Punjab, Kashmir, Seistan, Afghanistan and Bactria.

According to Dr. Altekar, Kanishka III was succeeded by Vasudeva II, the last of the Great Yueh-chi kings with any pretensions to imperial authority. During his reign, 'the position of the Kushanas became very critical and their empire was finally dismembered.' Besides their Indian enemies, a tribe called Jouan-Jouan was now pressing heavily on them from the north; their governors in the Punjab and Seistan had probably revolted. Serious danger threatened from the west where the rule of the Arsacids was supplanted by that of the Sassanians in Persia about this time. R. Ghirshman tells us that a Kushana king gave shelter to the family of the last Arsacid monarch and joined a confederacy formed with the intention of restoring the deposed dynasty, but retired after two years of futile warfare. This king may have been Vasudeva II. Soon the Sassanians began to encroach upon the Kushana dominions, and it appears that Vasudeva was deprived of Bactria by them. The Chinese annals inform us that in 230 A. D., Po-tiao, the king of the Great Yueh-chi, sent a legation to the Chinese court. Po-tiao is apparently a variant of Vasudeva, and it is not improbable that the Kushana king sought the help of China against the Sassanians. After him, minor Kushana chiefs seem to have ruled for some time in the Kabul Valley and North-Western India, but the Sassanians gradually subdued most of these also.

Conflicting theories have been evolved about the factor of factors which may be held primarily responsible for the collapse of the Kushana power in India. One view regards it as the result of the rise of the Bharasiva Nagas who are supposed to have built a great empire for themselves on the ruins of the Kushana authority; according to another, the main credit for the overthrow of the Kushanas is to be given to the warlike tribe of the Yaudheyas while a recent opinion attributes it to the onslaught of the Sassanians under Ardeshir I. Space forbids a detailed consideration of these various theories here, but none of them seems to fully meet the facts of the case. It is clearly a mistake to ascribe the downfall of

the Kushanas to any single cause. The Nagas, the Yaudheyas and the Sassanians—all played their own roles in it and so obviously did the Maghas and the various other powers such as the kings of Panchala, Ayodhya etc. and the tribes of the Malavas, Madras and others, that are known to have flourished in the Gangetic Valley and the neighbouring tracts after the withdrawal of the Kushanas. The pressure of the Jouan-Jouan from the north was also a factor, and we should not forget the possible adverse effect of the contest with China and Parthia.

B. Sakas and Satavahanas

The second century A. D., the epoch of Kushana ascendancy, witnessed important events taking place in the south also. We have seen above that about 50-70 A. D. the Satavahanas, already occupying a position of considerable importance under Satakarni I, had a serious rival in Mamabrus, the Scythic ruler of Gujrat and Kathiawar. Mambarus made Callicna, the principal emporium of the maritime trade of the Satavahanas, unsafe by his predatory raids but there is no clear evidence that he gained any decisive advantage over the Indian adversaries. Soon, however, the conflict between the Sakas and the Satavahanas was greatly intensified when towards the close of the first and the beginning of the second century A. D. the kingdom of Mambarus in Western India passed under the sway of Scythian chiefs belonging to the Khakharata or Kshaharata lineage. It is uncertain if Mambarus was himself a *Kshaharata* or if the latter was a new dynasty which overthrew the rule of his house in Western India, but the second one seems a more probable alternative. With the appearance of the Kshaharatas on the scene, the situation in the south took a grave turn. The Kshaharatas, and after them the Karddamakas—both of them are grouped under the convenient label of *Western Kshatrapas*—waged a great struggle against the Satavahanas for supremacy in the Deccan which seems to have continued with varying fortunes for about a century and left the contending parties in a state of political exhaustion. It is possible, as indicated elsewhere, that the Kshaharatas were viceroys or feudatories of the imperial house of the Kushanas and their fight against the Satavahanas

represented the southward thrust of the Kushana Empire. The available records of the family bear dates in an era that appears to be no other than the 'Saka' era, *i. e.*, the Kushana era commencing with the accession of Kanishka I. Both Bhumaka and Nahapana, the two known members of the dynasty, assumed the title *Kshatrapa* (—it is only in the last inscription of the reign of Nahapana that the superior title of *Mahakshatrapa* has been used—), usually signifying a subordinate or feudatory status at this time. Neither of the two chiefs is known to have issued gold coins and yet it appears from an inscription occurring at Nasik that a gold currency, called *suvarna*, circulated within the limits of the Kshaharata dominions. This was probably the gold currency issued by the Kushana emperors who minted a profusion of it. Moreover, on grounds of general probability also it seems unlikely that the Kshaharatas could have made much headway against the Satavahanas if they were not backed by a superior power in the conflict. All this raises a presumption that they were connected with the Kushanas in a subordinate capacity and that in fighting them the Satavahanas were really fighting the might of the Kushanas. But the evidence available at present does not enable us to be definite on the point and the opposite view has been emphatically advocated by more than one writer. It may be argued for the other side that both Bhumaka and Nahapana minted coins in their names,a privilege probably not enjoyed by mere provincial governors, and none of their inscriptions—there are half a dozen known so far—contains an indubitable allusion to a Kushana overlord. Very few Kushana coins, if any, have been recovered so far from the area known to have been under their rule. Just at present, therefore, the question if the Kshaharatas acknowledged the sovereignty of the Kushanas or they were independent rulers, if their struggle with the Satavahanas was a localised contest for the possession of the Deccan or part of the general imperial policy of the Kushanas aiming at the establishment of an all-India empire of the Maurya type,must be left undecided like so many other problems connected with India's past.

The Kshaharatas were probaly a northern family of Saka extraction and established themselves in Western India about this time.

As already noted, only two members of this family, Bhumaka and Nahapana, are *known*, the former of whom appears to have flourished about 100 A. D. while the latter came into office before 119 A. D. Their existence is revealed to us chiefly by their coins and a set of half a dozen inscriptions engraved during the reign of Nahapana. These sources contain no specific references to the Satavahanas, but their indirect testimony leaves no doubt that the Kshaharatas successfully fought them and made deep inroads into their territory, The coins of Bhumaka, bearing his name and the title *Kshatrapa*, are said to occur in Kathiwar, Gujrat, Malwa and the Ajmer region of Rajputana and these may accordingly be taken to have formed parts of his dominions. Kathiawar and Gujrat were obviously conquered, or inherited, by him from Mambarus or his successors, but Malwa was probably taken from the contemporary Satavahana king. The coins and inscriptions of Nahapana testify to a greater expansion of Kshaharata power at the cost of the Satavahanas. The coins are both of copper and silver and have been found over a wide area from Ajmer in the north to Maharashtra in the south. The inscriptions are all from Maharashtra. One of them, engraved at the order of the minister Ayama (Aryaman), has been found at Junnar in the Poona District while the rest, commemorating the religious donations of Nahapana's Hinduised son-in-law Ushavadata (Rishabhadatta), occur at Nasik and Karle. Of the numerous religious gifts of Rishabhadatta one is said to have been made at Surparaka (Sopara near Bombay), the capital of ancient Aparanta (North Konkan). It is thus clear that the Kshaharatas made extensive thrusts into the south and forced the Satavahanas out of Malwa, Aparanta and Maharashtra. For a time the Satavahanas must have been reduced to great straits. They apparently 'retired to the southern part of their kingdom, possibly to the *janapada* of the Bellary District which came to be known as *Satavahanihara*' and *may* even have been forced to accept the position of subordinate allies of the foreigners. Bhumaka may have made some conquests at their cost, but it is generally supposed that they were ousted from Aparanta and Maharashtra by Nahapana.

Under Nahapana, the Kshaharatas touched the high watermark of their glory and held the extensive region including

Kathiawar, Gujrat, Malwa, Aparanta, Maharashtra and Ajmer in their power. The wide extent of their rule in his time is attested, not only by the distribution of his coins and inscriptions, but also by the mention of localities like Bhrigukachchha (Broach), Dasapura (Mandasor in Western Malwa), Prabhasa (in Kathiawar), and Pushkara (in Ajmer) along with rivers like Tapi, Dahanuka (in the Thana District), Damana (Damanganga near Daman) and Parada (Par in the Surat District) in connection with the pilgrimages and benefactions of Rishabhadatta in the epigraphs. The inscriptions referring to the pious works of Rishabhadatta bear dates ranging from the 41st to the 45th year of an unspecified era while the record of Ayama's gift is dated in the year 46, obviously referable to the same era. Though there has been some controversy about this era and some even regard the dates as representing the regnal years of Nahapana, there seems little doubt that it is no other than the *Saka Samvat* of 78 A. D. and accordingly Nahapana may be taken to have ruled about 119-124 A. D. The view of some scholars identifying him with Mambarus who flourished about half a century earlier or even before does not appear to be well founded ; there is not only the difficulty of date, but also the definite opinion of Kennedy that the proposed emendation into Nambanus (Nahapana) is without justification. Curiously enough, while the inscriptions make no allusion to the Saka chief's war with the Satavahanas one of them contains a reference to his fight with a much less formidable enemy, namely, the Malavas (Malavas) of the Jaipur region of Rajputana. It is stated that the Malavas, who had obviously revolted against the satrap, threatened another tribe called Uttamabhadra and Rishabhadatta was despatched for the latter's relief. He suppressed the aggressive tribesmen and afterwards proceeded to the *tirtha* of Pushkara, apparently as a measure of thanks-giving for his success.

We are in the dark about the principal seat of Kshaharata power in Western India. If the identification of Nahapana with Mambarus of the Periplus, favoured by some writers, is accepted, then the Saka chief had his capital at Minnagara in Ariake. But the location of the town is uncertain. It has been variously identified with Mandasor (Dasapura), Dohad in the Pancha Mahals and

even Junnar. In some Jaina works Broach (Bhrigukachchha) seems to be mentioned as the capital of Nahapana.

Like Bhumaka, Nahapana is called *Kshatrapa* in coins and most inscriptions, but to this is also added the epithet *rajan*, a title Bhumaka is not known to have borne. In the last inscription of the reign (year 46=124 A. D.), the superior appellation of *Mahakshatrapa* has been used, suggesting that, as a result of his victories, he claimed a more exalted political status than that of his predecessor. But his reign probably did not last long after the date of the inscription and his career ended in a disastrous way. The Satavahanas were not reconciled to their great losses and made a determined bid to regain the lost prestige and possessions. About 125 A. D. there was a sudden resurgence of their power, and catastrophe overtook the Kshaharatas.

The factors leading to this turn of fortune are not clearly known. If the Kshaharatas were viceroys of the Kushanas, it may be suggested tentatively that the pressing developments in Chinese Turkistan caused by the renewed offensive of the Han about this time compelled the Kushanas to turn their attention from the south and thus gave the Satavahanas their opportunity. The leader of the Satavahana revival was the celebrated prince Gautamiputra Satakarni, son of queen Gautami Balasiri, mentioned as the 21st or 23rd king of the dynasty in *most* of the Puranas. In a long inscription engraved at Nasik in the 19th regnal year of his son, he is significantly described as the 'uprooter of the Khakharata(Kshaharata) family' (*Khakharatavasanìravasesakara*) and 'restorer of the glory of the Satavahanas' (*Satavahana-yasa. patithapanakara*). It is certain that these eloquent epithets are not mere idle panegyric. Inscriptions of the king himself have been found at Nasik and Karle in the Poona District. There can, as such, be no doubt that he recovered Maharashtra from the Kshaharatas who had earlier wrested it from his family. The earlier of the two Nasik epigraphs is dated in the 18th regnal year and records a grant made by Gautamiputra at 'Venakata in Govardhana (Nasik District), the victorious camp of the army which is gaining success.' 'Apparently his presence in the Nasik District on a warlike mission was connected with the

fight against the Kshaharatas' and we may hold that the great war between him and the latter was fought about the 18th year after his coronation. The war resulted in disaster for the Kshaharatas; Nahapana apparenly failed to check the Satavahana aggression and was overthrown. The discomfiture of the great satrap is clearly 'proved by the testimony of the Jogalthembi hoard (Nasik District) which consisted of Napahana's own silver coins and coins restruck by Gautamiputra.' 'In the restruck coins there was not a single one belonging to any prince other than Nahapana as would certainly have been the case if any ruler had intervened between Nahapana and Gautamiputra.' As the series of the Kshaharata inscriptions comes to an end abruptly in 124 A.D., the general assumption has been that the Satavahana king smashed the power of Nahapana in that year or shortly afterwards. His own reign probably commenced in c. (124—18=) 106 A. D. and lasted at least 24 years. A theory regarding him as the original of Vikramaditya, the traditional founder of the Vikrma Era in 58 B. C., can hardly be upheld.

Maharashtra was not the only province lost by the Kshaharatas to Gautamiputra. In the Nasik *prasasti* referred to above, the Satavahana king is also represented as the monarch of Suratha (Kathiawar), Aparanta (North Konkan), Anupa (district round Mahishmati on the Narmada), Akara (East Malwa) and Avanti (West Malwa). All these were apparently conquered from Nahapana in the course of the successful war that re-established the Satavahanas in Maharashtra. Gautamiputra thus pushed the frontiers of the Satavahana dominions to the extreme northern limits they had touched under Satakarni I. The Kshaharatas were extirpated, and most of the relations of Nahapana seem to have perished along with him in the war.

The list of Gautamiputra's possessions given in the Nasik *prasasti* includes, besides the above named places and Mulaka and Asaka (which may be taken to roughly denote Maharashtra), Vidabha (Berar) and Asika (the country on the Krishna to the east of Maharastra). Through his efforts the Satavahanas thus became for a time the dominant power of Southern and Western India, with

their direct jurisdiction extending from Kathiawar and the Arabian Sea in the west to Berar in the east and from Malwa in the north to Maharashtra in the south. Their exalted position probably enabled them to claim, though in a vague way only, sovereignty over the whole of trans-Vindhyan India. In the Nasik Inscription, Gautamiputra is styled lord of numerous mountains including Vindhya (Vindhyachala), Mahendra (Eastern Ghats), Sahya (Western Ghats) and Malaya (Travancore Hills) which girdle the peninsula and the claim has been advanced that his chargers had 'drunk the water of three oceans', viz., the Bay of Bengal, the Arbian Sea and the Indian Ocean. Such statements need not be accepted at their face value ; but they do imply that the Satavahana king occupied a high position in the south. In the Nasik Inscription, he is extolled as the extipator of Sakas, Yavanas and Pahlavas (Parthians). The Sakas were proably the Kshaharatas, but the circumstances of the conflict with the other two are not known.

Balasiri's son must have been a remarkable person to accomplish all this. His fond mother, who survived him, and his respectful son have bestowed the highest praise on him. He was, according to their royal scribe who drafted the Nasik *prasasti*, a remarkably handsome person 'endowed with the beauty of the full moon' and a great warrior who, 'being equal in prowess to Rama, Kesava, Arjuna and Bhimasena', 'routed the confederacies of his enemies' in many battles. As a ruler, he 'regarded the weal and woe of his subjects as his own,' 'levied only rightful taxes', and 'organised many festivals and fairs.' He 'prevented the contamination of the four *varnas*' and under him 'the Brahmanas and other classes flourished.' He was 'perfecly learned in the scriptures', 'the refuge of virtuous men', 'the home of the goddess of prosperity', and was 'reluctant to take the life of his enemy even if the latter had offended him'. Behind this conventional eulogy there was doubtless a vigorous and alert king gifted with a considerable measure of personal greatness.

But even he could not fully stabilise the position of the Satavahanas. Within a quarter century of the overthrow of Nahapana, they received another set-back and were forced to yield the

place of honour to the Sakas once again. The spearhead of the renewed Saka offensive, a family known as Karddamaka, appeared on the scene almost immediately after the downfall of the Kshaharatas. The founder of this new line was Chashtana, son of Ysamotika. Sylvan Levi and Sten Konow think that Chashtana was a scion of the Kshaharata dynasty itself as, according to them, Ysamotika is only the Scythian form of the Indian name Bhumaka. But, as pointed out by Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri, the identity of names does not necessarily imply identity of person and most scholars regard the family of Chashtana as different from that of Bhumaka, though both were probably of Scythic origin. The title of Chashtana on his earlier coins is Kshatrapa and the era of the Kushanas (i. e., Saka Era) has been uniformly used in the records of his dynasty down to the latest period. It is, therefore, not improbable that he was also a feudatory or viceroy of the Kushanas, as the Kshaharatas before him may have been, and it has been held that on the extirpation of the Kshaharatas by Gautamiputra, the Karddamakas were appointed viceroys of the southern satrapy (or whatever now remained of it) by the Kushanas 'with instructions to recover the lost districts from the Satavahanas." The supporters of this view may derive some strength from the fact that a statue bearing the name-label *Sastana* (probably Chashtana) has been recovered from the *devakula* of the emperor Huvishka at Mathura. But at the same time we must also remember that the Karddamaka princes minted coins in their own names without reference to any sovereign authority and there is no allusion to a Kushana overlord in any of their inscriptions. Therefore, as in the case of the Kshaharatas, the question of their relations with the Kushanas must be regarded as *sub judice.*

Chashtana began his career some time before S. E. 52 (=130 A. D.) when he is mentioned as a *rajan* in some short donative inscriptions found at Andhau in Kutch. It appears from coins that at first his title was only *Kshatrapa* but subsquently it was changed into *Mahakshatrapa.* As *Mahakshatrapa,* he adopted the well known Scythic practice of associating a subordinate ruler enjoying the status of *Kshatrapa* with him in the government of his dominions

The office of *Kshatrapa* was at first filled by his son Jayadaman but this prince died early and was succeeded by *his* son Rudradaman. Already in the Andhau Inscriptions (130 A. D.) Rudradaman is thus associated with his grandfather.

Led by Chashtana and Rudradaman, the Sakas resumed the strife with the Satavahanas and soon acquired remarkable success. It has been pointed out that some coins of Chashtana bear the type 'Cresent and Star with a Chaitya between the two.' 'As the Chaitya is a common type of the Satavahanas and is found on the northern issues of Gautamiputra Satakarni and Yajnasri Satakarni, it may well signify some extension of his (Chashtana's) power at their (Satavahanas') expense, some reconquest of territory previously taken by them from his predecessor Nahapana.'[28] The reoccupation by Chashtana of some northern districts of the Satavahana empire, including Western Malwa, is also borne out by the Geography of Ptolemy (a work written about 140 A. D.) which informs us that Ozene (i.e. Ujjayini in Malwa) was the capital of Tiastanes(Chashtana). But the most important evidence regarding the encroachment of the Karddamakas on the Satavahana dominions is provided by the Junagarh or Girnar Inscription of Rudradaman, one of the best known epigraphic documents of ancient India. Dated in the (Saka) year 72 (=150 A. D.), this famous record commemorates the reconstruction of the Sudarsana Dam in Kathiawar, seriously impaired by a terrible cylone, by the Pahlava Suvisakha, Rudradaman's governor in Anartta and Surashtra. The inscription describes Rudradaman (now an independent sovereign) as the master (*pati*) of the countries of *Akara* (East Malwa), *Avanti* (West Malwa), *Anupanivrit*, (the Mahishmati region), *Anartta* (part of Kathiawar), *Surashtra* (Kathiawar), *Svabbra* (the Sabarmati region), Maru (Marwar), *Kachchha* (Kutch), *Sindhu* (western part of the lower Indus Valley), *Sauvira* (eastern part of the lower Indus Valley) *Kukura* (unidentified at present), *Aparanta* (North Konkan) and Nishada (probably in the Vindhya Hills). A comparision of this list with the one occurring in the Nasik *prasasti* shows that *Akara*, *Anupanivrit*, *Surashtra*, *Kukura* and *Aparanta* must have been conquered from the Satavahanas. Indeed a specific allusion to the discomfiture of the Satavaha-

nas occurs shortly afterwards in the inscription when we are told that Rudradaman 'twice defeated in fair fight Satakarni, the lord of Dakshinapatha, but did not destory him on account of the nearness of relationship.' The identity of this Satakarni, the antagonist of the great satrap, is somewhat uncertain. Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar identifies him with Gautamiputra himself while others, following Rapson, take him to be that monarch's son and successor, Vasishthiputra Sri Pulumavi (c. 130—160 A. D.). No definite opinion is possible, but the probability of truth seems to lie with the latter rather than the former view. The identification proposed by Bhandarkar would imply that the victories of Rudradaman over Satakarni were not achieved in his own right as *Mahakshatrapa*, but on behalf of his grandfather who was probably still alive as Ptolemy seems to mention Chashtana and Pulumavi as contemporary rulers. Of this, however, there is no evidence in the Jungarh Inscription. Neither is there any suggestion in the Nasik *prasasti* that Gautamiputra had ever to climb down from the high position he had acquired by uprooting the Kshaharatas ; the glowing account of his exploits given in the epigraph itself seems to go against such an assumption and the epithet '*Satavahana-kula-yasapatithapanakara*' could hardly be regarded as very appropriate in case he had succumbed to the Karddamakas within a few years of his triumph over the Kshahaharatas. There is reason to believe that the daughter of Rudradaman was married to a Satavahana prince eitherbeforetheconflict,or immediately afterwards as a condition of peace (below). Was he, who seems to have ruled upto c. 170 A. D, old enough in c. 130 A. D. or earlier to have a daughter of marriageable age ? It is not impossible but may be regarded as doubtful. We may therefore hold provisionally that Satakarni of the Junagarh Inscription was Pulumavi, known to have been a contemporary of the great satrap and actually described as 'lord of Dakshinapatha' (Dakshinapathesvara) in the Nasik Inscription. The appellation Satakarni was probably used by the Satavahanas both as a personal and a dynastic name. It appears that soon after the strong arm of Gautamiputra was removed by death, the Karddamakas began their inroads into the Satavahana territory. A part of it was conquered by Chashatana but the real work of dislodging the Satavahanas from the irp osition of eminence was probably accomplished by Rudradaman. He became a Mahakshatrapa sometime between 130 and 150 A. D., probably at a date nearer to the former than the latter, and carried out his great campaigns against Pulumavi who was twice defeated and had to yield many of his provinces to the Sakas.

The boast of Rudradaman that he did not totally destroy Satakarni is literally true for there is no evidence that the victorious Karddamakas deprived the Satavahanas of their home province of Maharashtra or of Vidarbha. The nature of the 'near relationship that saved the Satavahanas from a worse fate is explained by an ins-

cription found at Kanheri in Aparanata. The epigraph refers to a prince called Vasishthiputra Satakarni, obviously a Satavahana, as the husband of the daughter of *Mahakshatrapa Ru* (dra), apparently Rudradaman I as the palaeography of the of the inscription is said to resemble closely that of the latter's Junagarh record. The distinguishing metronymic ef Rudradaman's son-in-law suggests that he was either Pulumavi himself or a brother of his. Thus, as D. C. Sircar says, 'the Satavahanas appear to have made an attempt to save a few of the conquered provinces by contracting a matrimonial alliance with the Karddamaka Sakas.' The treaty formally ceding the teritories may have been concluded about about 145 A. D.

Besides the triumph over the Satavahanas, the only specific political achievement of Rudradaman mentioned in the Junagarh Inscription is his victory over the Yaudheyas "who had become haughty due to being addressed as 'heroes' by all Kshatriyas." The Yaudheyas probably lived in the southern Punjab and the adjoining regions. How was it that the great satrap came into coflict with them ? It is not improbable that he undertook the campaign on behalf of his Kushana overlord (Huvishaka or Vasudeva I) to suppress the tribesmen then trying to shake off the foreign yoke. But if the Karddmakas were not feudatories of the Kushanas, then it must be taken to represnt a northward extension of the Karddamaka dominions at the cost of the Kushanas and the Karddamaka monarch may also be said ao have wrested the provinces of Sindhu and Sauvira from the successors of Kanishka I. In any case, it is clear that from the time of Rudradaman onwards, the subordination of the Karddamakas to the Kushanas, if there ever had been any, was of a purely nominal type. Indeed the conciliatory policy adopted by the former towards the Satavahanas appears more a policy of their own than of the Kushanas. The proud claim of Rudradaman in the Junagarh Inscription that men of all castes had chosen him as their protector and that he had himself 'acquired the name of Mahakshatrapa' indicates a status *de facto*, of if not *de jure*, independence. Whatever connection the Kushanas may have had with the south must be regarded as having ended at this stage. If it had been the aim of their policy to conquer South India and found an all-India empire the dream did not materialise. They could reduce the north, but the south eluded their grsap and their authority never extended beyond the northernmost parts of the peninsula, at best.

Rudradaman, then, was a powerful chief exercising authority over extensive dominions from Sind to Northern Konkan and from the Arbian Sea to Malwa. The Junagarh Inscription throws some welcome light on him as a man and ruler. He was a heroic and cultured monarch and won his laurels in the field of peace also If he was an adept in the various practices and mods of war, he is also said to have earned great fame by his proficiency in

grammar, poetry, music, logic and other sciences. The epigraph credits him with superb literary compositions, both in prose and verse, but none of these has survived. Robust and pleasing of person, he was a conscientious administrator with the good of his people at his heart and did not persecute the tax-payers with unlawful exactions. An important event of his reign was the reconstruction of the Sudarsana Lake which, as we have seen, had been damaged by a cyclone. As the cultivators were facing great hardship, Rudradaman undertook its repair through his governor, Suvisakha, and it is claimed that the cost of the enterprise was met by him out of his private treasury 'without oppressing the people with taxes, forced labour or emergency tribute.' He was served by loyal officers divided into the categories of *Matisachiva* (councillors) and *Karmasachiva* (executive officers). According to one authority he issued a new type of coin 29.

Though the victories of Chashtana and Rudradaman resulted in a substantial loss to the Satavahanas, they do not seem to have left them, for a long time in any case, in a greatly worse position than in the days of Gautamiputra. For, about this time we find them in effective control of the eastern part of the Decan also which was apparently not included in that monarch's dominions, though he may have claimed a vague sovereigntly over it. Vasishthiputra Sri Pulumavi is the earliest prince of the family whose coins and inscriptions are known to occur in this region. An inscription of his time has been found at Amaravati in the Krishna District and his coins are also brought from that area as well as the adjacent districts of Godavari and Guntur. Accordingly it is thought that he accomplished the conquest of the Andhra country, thus considerably lessening the effect of the Karddamaka blow. He may also have established his sway over some parts of the Coromandel Coast as coins bearing his name are said to occur as far south as Cuddalore. The unsettled state of Satavahana chronology makes it difficult to say whether these conquests were accomplished by him beforeor after the war with Rudradaman. His rule in Maharashtra is proved by inscriptions and in Berar, by coins. He thus exercised sway over wide tertitories and fully deserved the title *Dakshinapathesvara* applied to him in the Nasik Inscription. He is doubtless identical with Siropolemaios, king of Baithan (i. e., Paithan or Pratishthana), mentioned by Ptolemy in his *Geography* (c. 140 A. D.). His Karle (Poona District) inscription is dated in the 24th regnal year and the Puranas assign to him a reign of 28 or 29 years. The end of his rule may be placed c. 160 A. D.

Nothing is known about Sivasri Satakarni (c. 160—166 A. D.) and Sivaskanda Satakarni (c. 167—174 A. D.), the next two kings to occupy the Satavahana throne, according to the Puranic lists. The former is no doubt the same as Vasishthiputra Sivasri Satakarni o

coins discovered in the Krishna and Godavari Districts and is identified by some with Rudradaman's son-in-law mentioned in the Kanheri Inscription. If either or both of these rulers made attempts to recover the lost provinces from the Karddamakas—perhaps they did not—there is no evidence that their efforts were rewarded with any success. The date of Rudradaman's death is not known for certain, but Dr. A.S. Altekar suggests that it occurred in c. 170 A.D., and Saka power does not seem to have suffered a reverse in his time. The contest, however, was apparently revived by Yajnasri Satakarni, whose reign of about 30 years' duration—the Puranas give him 29 years and an inscription bears the regnal year 27—may be taken to have covered the last quarter of the second century and the opening years of the next century.

Before the 16th year of his reign (c. 190 A. D.), he seems to have launched an offensive against the Karddamakas and reconquered Aparanta (North Konkan) from them. This is suggested not only by the discovery of an inscription of his, dated in the 16th regnal year, at Kanheri in Aparanta but also by some coins found at Sopara (Surparaka, the capital of Aparanta) which are clearly imitated from the silver coinage of Rudradaman. His coins are also brought from Gujrat, Kathiawar, Chanda District of C. P. and the Krishna and Godavari Districts of Andhra. This may suggest that he reclaimed some other parts of Western India also from the Sakas, but in the absence of epigraphic corroboration this must remain uncertain.

It is not improbable that his success was partially due to the troubled state of affairs prevailing in the Karddamaka kingdom at this period. Damaghsada or Damajada I, the son and successor of Rudradaman I, died before the Saka year 100 (A. D. 178—179) and soon afterwards a struggle for the throne seems to have broken out between the deceased satrap's son Jivadaman and brother Rudrasimha.

By A. D. 181—2, the younger Karddamaka had been ousted by his experienced uncle who issued coins as Mahakshatrapa during the periods 103—10 (A. D. 181—88) and 113—18 (A. D. 191—197), after which the office of great satrap reverted to Jivadaman. In 188—190, Rudrasimha was only a Kshatrapa and several scholars connect this degradation of his position with the rise of a chief named Isvaradatta, probably an Abhira, whom the internal quarrels of the Karddamakas enabled to usurp the supreme authority for a short time. The Satavahana king apparently watched the situation closely and exploited it to his advantage.

The recovery of Aparanta (and possibly some other districts) by Yajna Satakarani was the last important episode in the Saka-Satavahana rivalry for supemacy in the Deccan. Indeed with it that rivalry appears to have finally ended. The domestic difficulties of the two powers became formidable soon afterwards, inducing them to concentrate their attention on internal problems, and new

claimants for political eminence appeared on the horizon, adding to their troubles. The prestige of the Satavahanas stood high in the time of Yajna and their empire extended from sea to sea, a fact probably alluded to in the king's coins bearing the figure of a ship. There is some basis for the view that his authority extended to the eastern districts of C. P. over which the earlier princes are not known to have ruled. But this state of prosperity did not last long. Yajna was the last notable king of his dynasty and, so far we know, the last to retain control of both the western and eastern provinces. His successors named in the Puranic lists—Vijaya, Sri Chandra and Pulumavi—were much less powerful than he and do not appear to have ruled in Western Deccan. During their time the Satavahana power declined rapidly; the Abhiras seized Maharashtra and scions of the family itself seem to have carved out independent principalities for themselves at the cost of the central authority. The last stronghold of the main dynasty was probably Andhradesa and the neighbouring area where it finally fell about the middle of the 3rd century.

The Karddamakas, on their part, were unable to take advantage of the downward trend in the political fortunes of the Satavahanas. The long-drawn out struggle had sapped their vitality also and left them in a state of stupor from which they could never fully recover. For two centuries more their rule endured in Western India but these were centuries of gradual decay and decline. The descendants of Rudradaman did not display the least tendency to resilience and were finally wiped off by the Guptas about 400 A. D.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Sten Konow, Pelliot, Kuwabara and others believe that the Kushanas were different from the Yueh-chi and lived in Bactria before the arrival of the latter. Konow thinks that they belonged to the stock of the Sakas who conquered Bactria before the Yueh-chi. Dr. P. C. Bagchi has advanced the view that they came of the original Tukhara population of Ta-hia. But it has been conclusively shown by Otto Maenchen-Helften (JAOS, 1944, pp. 71-81) that the crucial passage both in the Chien han shu and Hou han shu represents the five hsi-hous, including that of the Kushanas, as of the Yue-chi stock. There is, of course, a Saka element in the language used by the Kushanas on their coins in India. This may be due to the fact that there was a Saka strain in the Yue-chi from the very beginning. The discovery of a statue of the Saka chief Chashtana in the devakula of Huvishka at Mathura does not necessarily prove that the Kushanas were Sakas. The Kushanas were probably connected with the House of Chashtana by marriage.

2. The Chien han shu gives the name of Kao-fu (Kabul) in place of Tu-mi, but the Hou han shu says that this is a mistake.
3. It is stated that a Yueh-chi 'king' communicated some Buddhist scriptures to China at this date.
4. The testimony of these coins has led some writers to conclude that Hermaeus flourished about the middle of the first century A. D. But it seems unlikely that the Greek king flourished as late as this (above).
5. This was the view of Sten Konow and is accepted by many others. Dr. Mrs. J. E. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw is of opinion that Wema conquered the country upto Mathura as his coins are found in abundance as far east as that city.
6. Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, K. P. Jayaswal, Sten Konow and others are inclined to identify the Kushana king mentioned in the Panjtar record with Kadphises I on the ground that the earliest king of the dynasty was more likely than the others to be designated by his family name alone. But this is a far from necessary inference. As Wema was probably the first to conquer the region, it is quite possible that the people were not yet fully acquainted with his personal name and so used the tribal appellation only.
7. The coins of the 'nameless king' are still an enigma to numismatists. A comparison of these coins with those which bear the name of Wema leaves no doubt that they cannot be far removed from each other in point of time. One view about 'Soter Megas' is that he was the semi-independent governor appointed by Wema to administer his Indian provinces. Cunningham suggests that the occurrence of the letter 'Vi' in the field of some to the coins shows that their issuer stood in the relation of a vassal to Wema. But as the titles occuring on these coins are identical with those on some gold coins of Wema, it seems better to hold that the 'nameless king' is Wema himself.
8. JRAS, 1947, p. 46.
9. EHI, p. 273 and note.
10. Corpus II, lxxvi. The theory was first started by Baron Holstein.
11. Kanishka—1-23, Vasishka 24-28, Huvishka 28-60, Vasudeva I, 67-98.
12. These are Samyukta-ratna-pitaka and Dharma-pitaka-sampradaya-nidana-sutra.
13. This story is given by the 'Dharma-pitaka-sampradaya-nidana-sutra. It is stated that Devaputra Kanishka defeated in battle and demanded from the King of Pataliputra.

whose identity is not disclosed, a sum of nine hundred thousand pieces of gold. In lieu of this enormous amount, the king surrendered the Buddha's wooden bowl that he possessed, a naturally compassionate cock and the Bodhisattava Asvaghosha.

14. S. Levi identifies Sandares or Sandanes, mentioned in the Periplus as a ruler who held sway over Barygaza (Broach), with Kanishka, but most writers take him to be a Satavahana king. Levi's identification of Tung-li mentioned in Chinese records as a dependency of the Yueh-chi with the Dravida country of South India is similarly not accepted by others. The inhabitants of Tung-li are described as riding elephants and camels which is not true of South India.

15. The history of Parthia at this period is somewhat obscure. For about two years (77-79 A.D.) Vologases II and Pacorus appear to have been kings at the same time. In 79 A.D. Pacorus was ruling alone, but he had now a rival in Artabanus IV, whom, however, he seems to have overcome in 82. He then ruled upto 96 A. D. or later. After his death there was a period of disorder which terminated with the accession of Osroes in 106 A.D. See, The Cambridge Ancient History, XI, p. 210.

16. Calcutta Review, September, 1923, p. 379.

17. The remains at Shahji-ki-Dheri near Peshawar are taken by many scholars as those of the Sangharama of Kanishka. Alberuni refers to the Kanik (Kanishka) Chaitya, a well known vihara at Purushawar (Peshawar). The Chinese pilgrims Fahien, Sung-yun and Hiuen Tsang have described the grandeur of a great stupa of Kanishka at Peshawar which was more than 600 feet high. 'The fame of the Kanishka Mahavihara remained undiminished till the days of the Pala kings of Bengal as is apparent from the Ghoshravan Inscription of the time of Devapala'.

18. The Kalpanamanditika of Kumaralata(?) refers to this city of Kanishka as the Town of Ki-ni-tcha.

19. The information of Hwui-li involves an inherent improbability and is not corroborated by any other source.

20. The Hou han shu states that Khotan, Kashgar, Yarkand and other countries tendered their submission to China in A.D. 127. Two years afterwards Fang-tsien, king of Khotan, enlarged his influence against the wishes of the Chinese. He was defeated in A.D. 132 by the king of Kashgar whom the Chinese induced to attack him. The Chinese again interfered in Khotan in A.D. 152 and killed its king, Kien. Though it is said that in spite of this the power of Khotan went on increasing and the imperial prestige dwindled in Chinese Turkistan, it is clear that the dominant external influence there was now of the Han.

21. The existence of Kanishka III is revealed only by numismatic evidence but the evidence in question is fairly conclusive. See, The Gupta Vakataka Age, p. 14, n.

22. The Gupta Vakataka Age, p. 16.

23. The 'Kidara' Kushanas who flourished in the fourth century A. D. were a branch of the Great Kushanas.

34. As indicated elsewhere, the satraps Liaka and Patika of the Taxila region probably belonged to the Kshaharata family. The northern association of the Kshaharatas of Western India is also apparent from the use of Kharoshthi on their coins.

25. This is the view of leading Indologists like Fergusson, Rapson, Boyer Bhandarkar and Raychaudhuri and is generally accepted at present. R. D. Banerji argues that paleographically the inscriptions of Nahapana are not later than the Amohini Tablet Inscription of Sodasa (15 A. D.). But the evidence of paleography cannot be regarded as decisive on the point. In the opinion of an eminent epigraphist like Dr. D. C. Sircar, paleographically the inscriptions of Nahapana cannot be far removed from the Andhau inscriptions of Chashtana and Rudradaman which are dated in the Saka year 52 (=130 A.D.). Another argument of Banerji, Dubreuil and others that if Nahapana's dates are referred to the Saka Era, too many events will have to be placed between the years 46 and 52 of that era, has been effectively disposed of by Dr. Raychaudhuri (PHAI[6], pp. 486-7). The main contention of those who would assign Nahapana to a date considerably earlier than 119-124 A.D. is based on the history of Maharashtra. It is argued that if Gautamiputra Satakarni overthrew Nahapana and conquered Maharashtra in 124 A.D., he must have held that province upto 130 A.D. (from his 18th to 24th regnal year) and after that his son and successor Vasishthiputra Pulumavi ruled there at least upto his 22nd year, i.e. upto at least 74 S. E. 'But this is in conflict with the testimony of the Junagarh Inscription which suggests that Rudradaman deprived the Satavahanas of Maharashtra before 72 S. E. The notion, therefore, that the dates in the inscriptions of Nahapana are in the Saka era must be abandoned'. The unsoundness of this argument has been demonstrated by Raychaudhuri. There is really no evidence that Rudradaman ousted the Satavahanas from Maharashtra, there being no allusion to that province in the list of his possessions in the Junagarh Inscription. The contention that the great satrap could not have held Aparanta without being in possession of Maharashtra also has little force. Aparanta is a coastal region and could very well have been held from the sea by a power which, like Rudradaman, controlled the coast of Gujrat and Kathiawar.

26. PHAI[6], p. 483.

27. As suggested by D. C. Sircar, the treasury of Nahapana may have been captured by Gautamiputra. Attention has been drawn to the fact that the portraits on the Jogalthembi coins bearing the name Nahapana are not all of one and the same person. But this obviously cannot be made the basis of any historical conclusions.

28. AIU, p. 182.

29. Some writers prefer the identification of Satakarni of the Junagarh Inscription with Vasishthiputra Satakarni of the Kanheri Inscription, who was Rudradaman's son-in-law. But this prince, if he ever ruled independently, must have reigned only after Pulumavi whose reign seems to have ended after the date of the Junagarh record (150 A.D.). Besides the possibility that the prince named in the Kanheri record is Pulumavi himself also cannot be ruled out. Some think of Yajna Satakarni in this connection but that is clearly wrong.

30. C. D. Chatterji in D. R. Bhandarkar Volume.

31. In Maharashtra, the Sata vahanas were replaced by the Abhiras and in the Kanarese country by the Chutus or Chutu Satakarnis, probably a branch of the imperial Satavahana family itself. In Andhradesa, the successors of Yajnsri were succeeded by the Ikshvakus who were, in their turn, soon replaced by the Pallavas.

CHAPTER IV

On the Eve of the Gupta Empire

The decline of the Kushana and Satavahana Empires left the inevitable legacy of disorder. A few of the new states which rose into view on their disintegration soon acquired considerable dimensions and prestige and, in spite of their increasing losses, the Western Kshatrapas continued to occupy a high position in the country. But side by side with these there now existed a multitude of small states and principalities, zealously guarding their freedom against encroachment and adding confusion to the political picture of the day. This state of affairs lasted upto the time of the emergence of the Gupta Empire when the situation was materially altered by the impact of a strong centralising force.

The most important power that flourished in India on the eve of the rise of the Guptas was that of the Vakatakas. The founder of this celebrated dynasty of Brahmana rulers[1], belonging to the Vishnuvriddha lineage (*gotra*), was Vindhyasakti, a political upstart who seems to have begun his career about the middle of the 3rd century A. D. Though nothing definite is known about his origin and the patrimony he inherited, it seems probable that his ancestors were 'local officers in Berar under the defunct Satavahana empire' and that 'they continued to administer the territory under their charge even when that empire disappeared'.[2] In the official inscriptions of his family Vindhyasakti is designated as the banner *(ketu)* of the *Vakatakavamsa* and high praise is bestowed on him as a fighter ; but no specific exploits of his are recorded in literature or epigraphs. Attention may, however, be drawn to the fact that in the Puranas his name figures among those of the kings of Vidisa in Eastern Malwa. This probably signifies that from his base in Berar or Western C. P. he extended the pale of his authority across the Vindhyas so as to include the region of Eastern Malwa, a success which must have been achieved at the cost of the Karddamaka Kshatrapas. He was succeeded by his son

Maharaja Haritiputra Pravarasena (I), referred to simply as Pravira in the Puranas. The new ruler was a valiant and capable prince who greatly enlarged the range of Vakataka authority and made it a really important power of the time. In the records of the dynasty he is described as *Samrat* (Emperor)—no other prince of the family is honoured with that epithet—and it is stated that he performed a number of Brahmanical sacrifices including the Vajapeya and the Asvamedha, the latter of which he celebrated no less than four times. The Puranas also attribute to him the performance of Vajapeya sacrifices. It is, therefore, certain that under his leadership the Vakatakas emerged from obscurity and carved out a high place for themselves. But, as in the case of his father, no exact details of his wars or of the extent of the Vakataka territory under him are available. His immediate successors are known to have controlled the entire country from C. P. and Bundelkhand in the north to Northern Hyderabad in the south. It has been suggested with considerable plausibility that the work of incorporating this wide region into the Vakataka dominions was accomplished by Pravarasena himself by means of a number of successful military campaigns. Dr. Altekar thinks that he probably conquered the Andhra country also and may have compelled the Western Kshatrapas to pay homage to him, but such a view, as its learned originator himself admits, is only a possibility, unsupported by any positive evidence[3]. An altogether untenable estimate of the power of Pravarasena is given by Dr. K. P. Jayaswal who represents him as the 'Lord paramount practically of the whole of India'.[4]

In the second part of his long reign, of which the duration is given as sixty years by the Puranas, Pravarasena I was probably a contemporary of Chandragupta I of the Gupta dynasty, possibly even of Samudragupta. It appears that his death (c. 325-330 A. D.) was followed by an internal strife in the Vakataka family leading to a division of the kingdom among at least two lines of the ex-emperor's descendants.[5] The partition obviously weakened the Vakataka position and this probably explains, in some measure, the apparently strange fact that it was not a successor of the imperial Pravarasena but of the much less powerful Chandragupta I who rose to the paramount status in the country.

Another royal dynasty enjoying a position of importance in the pre-Gupta period was that of the Pallavas. The origin of the

Pallavas is a matter of controversy,[6] and the earliest phases of their history are still involved in obscurity. But it seems that, like the Vakatakas, they were also at first feudatories or high officers of the Satavahanas and set up an independent kingdom on the disappearance of the latter. Early in their career they built up extensive dominions which had their administrative centre at Kanchi or Kanchipuram (modern Conjeevaram) near Madras and included a part of the Andhra country between the Krishna and Godavari rivers in the north. The Andhra area was apparently conquered by them from a faimly which bore the epic name of Ikshvaku[7] and had established itself in the region on the decline of the Satavahanas. The western limit of their power cannot be acurately determined, but 'considering the tradition that the Kadamba Mayurasarman got the country between the Western Sea and Prehara from a Pallava monarch, and that the Ganga kings (of South Mysore) continued to occupy a feudatory relation to the Pallavas for some generations, it seems probable that the Pallava dominions extended right upto the Western Sea at this early period'.[8] The possession of this wide territory enabled the Pallavas to assume high-sounding imperial titles like *Dhamma-maharajadhiraja* (*Dharmamaharajadhiraja)* which was borne by one of their early rulers, Skandavarman. Skandavarman, probably called also Siva-Skandavarman or Vijaya,-Skandavarman,[9] was not the earliest ruling member or founder of the dynasty for in one of the epigraphs he is described as a *Yuvamaharaja* or heir-apparent, but nothing definite is known about his predecessors. His date is also variously given by scholars. While some assign him to the period about 250 A. D. others would place him about half a century later, in the early years of the fourth century. About Pallava rule after him also, we have no clear information. Vishnugopa, the king of Kanchi in c. 350 A D. when Samudragupta undertook his famous southern expedition, was apparently a Pallava.

The authority of the Western Kshatrapas (Karddamakas) registered a rapid deterioration in the third century. About the beginning of the century the Malavas of the Ajmer-Udaipur region, who had earlier challenged unsuccessfully the sovereignty of the Kshaharatas, seem to have risen in revolt against them and asserted their independence. Some scholars are of opinion that the author of their liberation was a chief named (Sri) Soma one of whose

inscriptions 'announcing how freedom and prosperity had returned to the country of the Malavas' and 'how the fame of his exploits had filled the wide space between the earth and the heaven' has been recently discovered.[10] Numismatic evidence suggests that about 250 A. D. the Kshatrapas lost Malwa, a part of which was probably annexed by the Vakataka Vindhyasakti.[11] Sind also must have slipped out of their control soon after this, if not actually before, as it would hardly be possible for them to retain hold of the province after the loss of Western Rajputana. The sphere of their power thus became confined to Gujrat and Kathiawar and it was in these regions that they were finally annihilated by the Guptas. About the beginning of the fourth century, a change of regime further weakened the Kshatrapas. Mahakshatrapa Bhartridaman who began his independent rule in 282 A. D. had his son, Visvasena, associated as the junior colleague (Kshatrapa) with him. But it was not the latter prince, but one Rudrasimha II, described as the son of Svami Jivadaman, who succeeded him in c. 304 A D., most probably by a violent revolt. The new chief, however, did not assume the title Mahakshatrapa and his successor Yasodaman II also issued coins only as Kshatrapa. Between 333 and 347 A. D., there is a break in the coinage. These indications no doubt point to a period of trouble and it has been suggested by some that about this time the Kshatrapa dominions were conquered by the Sassanians But this theory is not favoured by most writers as there is no definite evidence of the extension of Sassanian authority over Gujrat and Kathiawar.[12] Other views, attributing the decline of the Kshatrapa power to the intervention of the Vakatakas or the Guptas, are also only plausible hypotheses.

In parts of Central India and U. P., kingly families belonging to the Naga stock rose into prominence after the withdrawal of the Kushanas. It appears from the Puranic accounts that powerful Naga ruling houses flourished in centres like Mathura and Padmavati near Gwalior) (Padam-Pawaya before the rise of the Guptas. The most important of these was probably that of Padmavati which seems to have been known as *Bharasiva*[13], so called because its members carried a Sava-linga on their shoulders. The Bharasivas were in matrimonial alliance with the Vakatakas and one of their chiefs, Bhavanaga, is mentioned in the records of the latter dynasty as the maternal grand-father of Rudrasena I.[14] We read in these records that they

performed as many as ten horse sacrifies and were 'besprinkled on the forehead by the water of the Bhagirathi (Ganges), obtained by their valour.' They were, as such, a powerful dynasty of rulers whose dominions probably extended to the Ganges, though the view that they were primarily responsible for the overthrow of the Kushana power and had acquired a truly imperial status which they bequeathed to the Vakatakas is not a satisfactory one. At the end of the third century A.D., the Nagas of Mathura and Padmavati were 'among themselves ruling over the territory which included Mathura, Dholpur, Agra, Gwalior, Cawnpore, Jhansi and Banda.'

The Sassanian emperors of Persia continued to press hard against the north-west. In 283 A. D. a civil war broke out between the ruling emperor Varahran (Vaharam) II and his brother Hormuz in which the petty Sakas and Kushana rulers of North-Western India and the adjoining borderland sided with the latter. Fortune favoured Varahran. He crushed the rebellion and, perhaps as a measure of retaliation, soon annexed Seistan, Makran, Afghanistan, North-Western Frontier Province and Sind to his empire. Besides the Sakas and Kushanas of these parts, the chiefs of the tribes called Paradana (Parada) and Abhira also became his vassals. As seen above it is held by some that the Sassanians extended their sway as far Kathiawar and Malwa and imposed their authority over the Western Kshatrapas for a time, but this conclusion is not generally accepted.[12] At the time when the superstructure of the Gupta Empire was being raised by the victories of Chandragupta I and Samudragupta, the Sassanians probably dominated a considetable part of the border-regions of India.

The major states of the pre-Gupta epoch, referred to above, embraced a substantial part of the country. Outside their orbit, however, the political picture was marked by confusion and chaos. We have a valuable document in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta to shed light on this state of affairs. The inscription was probably engraved not earlier than 350 A. D. but there can be no doubt that most of the numerous powers mentioned in it as having been reduced by Samudragupta came into being, or reclaimed their freedom, on the decline of the Kushana, Kshatrapa and Satavahana authorities in the third century or earlier. Further information may be gleaned from coins and other epigraphs of the period. The testimony of these sources reveals that in the Central and Western Punjab, the rule

of the Kushana emperors was probably followed by that of three Scythic houses called Shaka, Shilada and Gadahara[15], the last named of which continued at least upto the time of Samudragupta. Abutting on the dominions of these to the east and south-east, was a broad belt of tribal states, the more important ones being those of the Madras of Sialkot (Central Punjab), Yaudheyas (Eastern Punjab and Northern Rajputana), Malavas (Mewar, Tonk and the adjoining areas of South-Eastern Rajputana) and Arjunayanas (Agra Jaipur tract). The 'belt' stretched to Central India where mention is found of the Abhiras (probably of Ahirwada, between Bhilsa and Jhansi), Sanakanikas (of the Sanchi region), Kakas (probably occupying a small district to the north of Sanchi), Prarjunas (located by some in the Narasimhapur) District of C.P.) and Kharaparikas (exact habitat not known). Eastward, the hilly region, full of dense forest, extending from the neighbourhood of Jubbulpore through Chhota Nagpur into Orissa was parcelled out among a number of small chieftainships collectively known as *atavikarajya* or forest-kingdoms. A similar state of disunity prevailed in the GangeticValley where Ahicchhatra, Ayodhya, Kausambi and other cities had again become centres of independent regional governments on the decline of the Kushanas. The dynasty which followed the Kushanas in Kausambi and ruled there upto c. 250 A. D. or somewhat later was probably that of the Maghas. It seems to have been founded by a chief named Magha who was, in all probability, a feudatory of the Kushanas[16]. At first its rule was perhaps confined to parts of Baghelkhand but subsequently expanded gradually to the north until it included Kausambi. we have no clear knowledge of the successors of the Maghas at Kausambi before the Guptas. About this time the Lichchhavis also emerged into view again in the Gangetic Valley after several centuries of oblivion. Their alliance enabled the Guptas to rise high in the political firmament, but the exact location of their principality at this period is not known. Some place it in the old territory of North Bihar while others believe that it comprised Magadha and included the town of Pataliputra. Some of the families of the nine Aryavartta kings named in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription certainly ruled in U.P., Bihar and Bengal, but in most cases their identification is not certain. Independent monarchies flourished in South-Eastern Bengal, Assam, Nepal, Kartripura (probably Kumaun-Garhwal) and other places on the fringes of the Gangetic plain.

The political scene in South India, exclusive of the areas controlled by the Vakatakas and the Pallavas, was similarly one of small states and powers. Orissa, Ganjam and Southern Kosala were in a state of fragmentation when Samudragupta ventured into the South. The Allahabad Pillar Inscription mentions several states of Dakshinapatha which have been located in various parts of Orissa and Ganjam, namely, Mahakantara, Kottura, Pishtapura, Erandapalla and Devarashtra. The inscription also refers to the kingdoms of Vengi, Palakka, Avamuktaka and Kusthalapura comprising parts of what seems to have been Pallava territory in the time of Skandavarman. It is, however, possible that some of these still acknowledged the sovereignty of the Pallavas. Southern Kosala, comprising the districts of Raipur, Bilaspur and Sambalpur was an independent state at this time and probably had been so since the downfall of the Satavahanas. In Western Deccan, the Andhras had been succeeded by the Abhiras and lesser chiefs belonging to the old families called Maharathi and Mahabhoja. It has been suggested that Isvarasena, an Abhira ruler of Maharashtra, was the founder of the so-called Kalachuri Era of 248 A. D., but this cannot be regarded as certain[17]. Soon afterwards, the Vakatakas extended their power over some regions of W. Deccan. The province of Kuntala (the Kanarese country) was held during the third century, or a part of it, by the dynasty of the Chutus or Chutu Satakarnis which probably claimed kinship with the defunct Satavahanas.[18] The Far South remained, as of old, in the possession of the Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas, but few authentic details of the history of these powers have been preserved, though famous rulers like Karikala and Nedungdiyan are often assigned to this age.

About the beginning of the fourth century A. D. political India thus displayed a spectacle of decentralisation and division. A stupendous task faced the Gupta rulers when they began their empire-building activity. They accepted the challenge of the times and succeeded where the Vakatakas had failed.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. In an inscription at Ajanta, Vindhyasakti, the founder of the Vakataka family, is clearly stated to have been a dvija, i.e , a Brahmana. Later Vakataka records mention Vishnuvriddha as the gotra of the Vakatakas. The metronymics Haritiputra and Gautamiputra used by some princes

of the dynasty also suggest that their mothers came of Brahmana families. The emperor Pravarasena I performed a Brihaspatisava sacrifice which seems to have been intended for Brahmanas only. As Rudrasena II, a great-great-grandson of Vindhyasakti, was a junior contemporary of Chnndragupta II, and obviously flourished about 400 A.D., and as Pravarasena I had an unusually long reign of about 60 years, Vindhyasakti may reasonably be placed about the middle of the 3rd scentury A.D. This is also corroborated by the fact that in the time of Prithvishena I, the father of Rudrasena II, who may be taken to have ascended the throne in about 360 A.D., the family is said to have been ruling prosperously for a century. (varsha-satamabhivardhamana-kosa-danda-sadhana-santanaputra-pautrinah).

2. The Gupta Vakataka Age, p. 96. The question of the original home of the Vakatakas is a controversial one. According to Dr. K. P. Jayaswal, the family belonged originally to the village of Bijnaur-Bagat in Bundlekhand, but this cannot be regarded as well established. 'The Kureha inscription does not refer to the Vakatakas as has been contended nor do the Puranas refer to any connection of the early rulers of this dynasty with the Kilakila river of the Punna State, as has been maintained.' Equally hypothetical is the view of Dr. V. V. Mirashi (Annual Bulletin of the Nagpur University, No. I, p. 9) that the Vakatakas were a dynasty of southern origin. The Vakataka inscriptions no doubt bear many similarities to the Pallava records, but this may be due rather to the early association of both the ruling houses with the Satavahanas than to the contiguity or nearness of their original homes. The assumption of the title Dharmamaharaja by Vakataka princes and the evidence of the metronymic Haritiputra which they shared with the Kadambas, Chalukyas and others also cannot be regarded as decisive. A third century inscription from Amravati mentions a Vakataka pilgrim but gives no indications as to the place from which he came. The location of Purika and Chanaka, the two capitals of the early Vakatakas mentioned in the Puranas, near the foot of the Rikshavat (Satpura) and in the Kanarese country respectively lacks convincing proof. The Purika province is mentioned along with places like Dasarna, Vislarbha and Asmaka in ancient texts.' It is, in the present state of knowledge, impossible to say anything definite about the original home of the Vakatakas. But, as stated above, it seems that they began their career from Berar or Western C.P.

3. The Gupta-Vakataka Age, pp. 99-100. There is no clear indication that Andhradesa was ever included in the Vakataka dominions. Dr. Altekar has drawn attention to a tradition referred to in Srisailasthalamahatmya stating that a daughter of king Chandragupta, named Chandravati, daily offered a garland of jasmine flowers to God Mallikarjuna of Srisaila, in the Kurnool District on the Krishna. But the identification of King Chandragupta with Chandragupta II and of

Chandravati with Prabhavatigupta is not supported by any positive evidence. The fact that the god at Srisaila was a form of Siva while both Prabhavati and her husband were probably Vaishnavites seems to go against the identification.

3. In the Karddamaka family of Western India, the title Makakshatrapa remained in abeyance during the period c. 295-340 A.D. The reason of this is not clear. Dr. Altekar's view (The Gupta Vakataka Age p. 58) that the Kshatrapas had to accept the sovereignty of the Vakataka Pravarasena I is plausible but not certain. Some ascribe the Kshatrapa debacle to the intervention of the Sassanians (PHAI6, pp. 510-11).

4. The theory of Dr. Jayaswal regarding the extent of the Vakataka authority under Pravarasena I is highly fanciful. There is not a shred of authentic evidence that the Pallavas of South India were descended from a son of Pravarasena or that the Maghas of Kausambi were a branch of the Vakataka family. The reading Pravarasena on some Mathura coins is altogether untenable, the correct reading being Virasena. The contention that the sovereignty of Pravarasena was accepted by King Sundaravarman of Magadha whose son Kalyanavarman drove Chandragupta I out of Pataliputra with Vakataka assistance and that Samudragupta had to start his career as a Vakataka feudatory is also similarly ill-founded. The historicity of the plot of the drama Kaumudimahotsava on which this view is primarily based and its bearing on the history of the Vakatakas and the Guptas is extremely doubtful, as a more thorough examination of it in vol. II will show. The conquest of the Punjab by Pravarasena from the Kushanas is purely imaginary.

5. Tasya putrastu chatvaro bhavishyanti naradhipah (Pargiter, D. K. A., p. 50). The division of the kingdom is also clearly borne out by the text of the Ajanta Inscription as revised by Dr. V. V. Mirashi.

6. The question of the origin of the Pallavas and their early history will be discussed in Vol. II.

7. Only three rulers of the Ikshvaku family of Eastern Deccan are known, viz. Santamula I, his son Virapurushadatta and the latter's son Ehuvula Santamula II. Though Santamula I performed the Asvamedha and other sacrifices, the Ikshvakus were a purely local family of Andhra. Their rule probably covered the second and third quarters of the 3rd Century A. D.

8. The Gupta-Vakataka Age, p. 231.

9. Some writers regard Siva-Skandavarman and Vijaya-Skandavarman as different from Skandavarman.

10. The Gupta-Vakataka Age, p. 39.

11. Ibid.

12. The Classical Age, p. 52.

3. JNSI V, pp. 21-27.

14. This reference in the Vakataka inscriptions probably suggests that Bhavanaga rendered valuable assistence to Rudrasena I at some critical juncture. Bhimanaga, Vibhunaga, Gana patinaga, Vyaghranaga, Brihaspatinaga, Vasunaga, Bhavanaga and a few other Naga kings are known from their coins.

15. The nationality of these families is not clear. It may be that they were offshoots of the Kushana dynasty itself, but it is also possible that they were of Saka origin. The Shaka dynasty had probably its headquarters at Peshawar. Kings belonging to these houses are known exclusively from coins and their foreign extraction is clear from their names such as Sayatha Sita, Kirada, Pasana, Bacharna etc.

16. A chief named Magha is mentioned in a recently discovered Mathura inscription. He may have been the founder of the dynasty, which seems to be designated as Megha in the Puranas. The known rulers of the Magha family are Vasishthiputra Bhimasena, Kautsiputra Pothasiri, Bhadramagha, Gautamiputra Sivamagha, Vaisravana, Bhimavarman, Satamagha and Vijaya-magha. There is some controversy about the date of the Maghas. According to some writers, the era used by them in their inscriptions is the Chedi era of 248 A.D. or the Gupta era of 319-20 A. D. But this view seems to be untenable as it would make the Maghas contemporaries of the imperial Guptas who certainly ruled in Kausambi. Most scholars refer the dates of the Maghas to the Saka Era and believe that they flourished during the second and third centuries A. D.

17. ABORI, XXVII, 111.

18. The Chutu line is represented by Haritiputra Vishnukada-Chutukulananda Satakarni and his daughter's son Sivaskandanaga-sri. A kind named Mulananda is also known from coins. The Chutus were replaceg by the Kadambas about the middle of the 4th Cen. A. D,

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CHAPTER V

Social and Economic Conditions

A. SOCIETY

The general structure of society remained the same as in the preceding epoch. The place of the individual in society and his relations with his fellow men were determined on the dual basis of his *Varna* and *Jati*. Liteiary and epigraphic sources alike testify to the presence of numerous castes and subcastes, functioning as hereditary and craft-exclusive units, within the four great classes, specially among the Vaisyas and Sudras. The Dharmasastra of Manu, acknowledged on all hands as a product of this period, mentions a large number of 'mixed castes' and follows the *sutras* in its explanation of their emergence and growth[1]. The same view of the matter is taken by Yajnavalkya, another well known *Smritikara*, probably belonging to this age. The group-mindedness of the people is reflected in the epigraphs of the time also. Most of these refer to persons as belonging to groups of *Lohavarna*, *Manikara*, *Vanik*, *Gandhika* etc. and make only scanty mention of their *Varna* or class. Inscriptions also give other expressions like *Halika* (plughman), *Murdhaka* (possibly a branch of the Kshatriyas) and *Golika* (herdsman), indicating the importance of sub-castes in the social set-up

From c. 200 B. C. the Brahmanas seem to have made a determined effort to tighten the caste rules and revive the prestige of the *Varnadharma* which must have suffered to some extent due the rapid expansion of Buddhism under the Mauryas. The *Manavadharmasastra* typfies the fervour with which this programme was carried out. In this celebrated work, which enjoys high respect in Inida even to-day due to its comprehensive character, we get a more rigid ideal of the caste system than in any of the prveious texts. "One's own (caste) duty" says Manu, "is more desirable, even if it be lowly, than the duty of other castes, even if exalted. For, one who lives by the duty of others at once loses his caste". "If a person of low birth (caste) follows the profession of a high caste due to greed, the king

should at once make him poor (i.e. deprive him of his property and belongings) and send him into exile". Further, "the country where such mixtures (i.e. mixtures of classes), the contaminators of caste, occur, falls very soon along with its people". In their attempt to rehabilitate caste, the theorists were not alone. Brahmana ruling families like those of the Baimbikas, Sungas and Kanvas doubtless strengthened their hands by their patronage and active encouragement and in the inscriptions we actually find a Satavahana ruler proudly claiming that he had 'averted the contamination of the four Varnas'. There is some evidence that the Buddhist thinkers and writers tried to combat the reaction and a vehement attack was made on caste by the authors of such works as the *Vajrasuchi*, traditionally ascribed to Asvaghosha. The ideological war ended in favour of the Brahmanas and gradually caste took firmer roots in society than before. The consciousness of caste penetrated into the Buddhist fold itself and in some epigraphs we see *upasakas* and *upasikas* (lay devotees) of the faith mentioning their *Varna* with apparent pride and satisfaction.

The period following the Mauryas witnessed the steady infiltration into India of foreign peoples and tribes with their exotic customs and practices. Such was the vitality of India's culture that all these were rapidly absorbed and were soon undistinguishable from the rest of the population. Foreigners like Menander and Heliodorus retained their alien names but embraced Indian creeds and usages. Gradually the personal and family names were also thoroughly Indianised and we find such purely Indian appellations as Indragnidatta, Dharmadeva, Dhammarakshita, Rishabhadatta, Dakshamitra, Rudradaman etc. used by the foreigners in the inscriptions. Brahmanism, Buddhism, Jainism, Vaishnavism and Saivism—all claimed devotees from among the new-comers and received substantial donations from the more opulent of them. Their influx created a problem for the Brahmana *Sastrakaras* who were faced with the question of assigning a place to them within the framework of caste. The orthodox opinion seems to have favoured their relegation to the rank of Sudra. Thus we find Manu declaring that many tribes including Saka, Yavana and Pahlava were originally Kshatriya but had been degraded to be *Vrishalas* (Sudras) due to non-contact with Brahmanas and non observanca of sacred rites[2]. Patanjali describes the the Sakas and Yavanas as 'unexcluded' (*aniravasita*) Sudras. But there can be no

doubt that the Sastric injunction was not valued much in actual life and most of the foreign conquerors, being warriors and rulers, swelled the ranks of Kshatriyas. Some of the invading tribes were accompanied by their own priests and it would seem that these had to be admitted to the status of Brahmana. The Maga or *Sakadvipi* Brahmanas were probably such priests who came to India in the wake of the Saka invasions. Inscriptions bear clear testimony to the exalted social rank of the foreigners. The Satavahanas themselves, though boasting of having enforced the caste-rules, intermarried with the Sakas and Saka princesses adorned the harems of Ikshvaku kings of the Eastern Deccan. In the Junagarh isnscription of Rudradaman we read that the great Saka statrap had won in *Svayamvara* the hands of many maidens belonging to kingly families and it seems certain that some at least of these came from native dynasties of high pedigree.

As in the case of Maurya India, only a few details about rural life during this period can be gleaned from the various sources. Some representations of village scenes are found in the mass of relief sculptures at Amravati, Sanchi and other places but these, like the stray references in literature, provide only fragmentary and static glimpses of general life in the countryside. We are somewhat better placed in respect of the cities. Not only is more information forthcoming from the different literary texts, in the *Kamasutra* of Vatsyayana we have a rich source of material bearing on the subject. The man about town is seen to have attained a high level of culture and leads an easy but full life. Living in his comfortable house, complete with its own garden, pond and shady bowers and with its apartments furnished with soft beds, divans, cupsidors, toilet-tablets, pet birds and various other articles of comfort and elegance, he usually gets up early in the morning and after the daily bath indulges in an elaborate toilet involving a liberal use of collyrium, lipstick and ointment. He has three principal meals a day and does not shun meat which, along with the various preparations of rice, barley, wheat and milk, constitutes his *menu*. He is no disdainer of liquor and is somewhat of a connoisseur of it. Passing long hours in the company of artists and literary men, he is himself something of a creative artist and might be able to play on the lute or compose poems of high or low merit. He has also a taste for sculpture, clay-modelling, painting, and the other accessories of civilised life and enjoys frequent literary or musical gatherings which

are usually held in the houses of the members of his circle but may sometimes be fixed for the residence of an accomplished courtesan. There are moonlight parties, usually on some spacious terrace. The city-man is not an exclusive devotee of the High Muses and delights in watching fights of cocks, bulls, quails or rams as also in attending the various public functions and festivals marking the collective life of his city. A grand occasion for him is the *Vasantostava* or the Spring Festival when he joins in the merry processions of the townsmen, rubbing shoulders with high and low alike, and abandons himself to the mirth of the moment, scattering colour and coloured water over whomsoever he comes across. The above pictures of the life of a city-dweller, based chiefly on Vatsyayana's account, is, of course, true only of the rich and leisured upper classes. The middle class family men obviosly could not afford this expensive gaiety and elegance and led a more monotonous life.

The nagaraka's (city-dweller's) amenities were shared to some extent by the ladies of his household who were given a good training in music, dance, painting and the other arts appropriate to their sex and station in life. Following the general tenor of the earlier didactic and religious works, the *Smritikaras* of this period also are seen to decry women and brand them as fickle, inferior creatures. In a generous mood, Manu might declare that 'where women are honoured there the gods abide',[3] but elsewhere the innate reactionary in the lawgiver asserts himself: "Due to their natural erotic nature, fickle-mindedness and lack of affection, women, even when well-guarded, act against their husbands." Manu repeats the dictum of the *sutras* that a woman should be 'protected in childhood by the father, in youth by the husband and in old age by the sons. She is not worthy of independence.' He also enjoins upon women absolute obedience and fidelity to their husbands even if they are depraved and bad-tempered and grants to the latter the right of inflicting bodily punishment on the womenfolk or discarding them immediately if they speak harshly to them. Manu's views regarding the Upanayana and other sacraments of women are the same as those of the earlier jurists but a harsher note is sounded by Yajnavalkya who forbids the Upanayana ceremony altogether for women. The lowly opinion of the lawgivers about the character, capabilities and status of the fair sex was apparently not shared fully by the people in general and the inscriptions of the age present womenfolk in the

light of a useful, active limb of society. Many of the donations recorded in the epigraphs, including some larger ones, were made by women, either singly or conjointly with their husbands and relatives. Among the Satavahanas, a queen acted as the co-partner of her husband in his numerous religious rites, including Asvamedha, and on his death took up the reins of government as the regent for her minor sons. In the Pallava family, a *Yuvarajni* (consort of the heir-apparent) granted a charter, apparently without having to take the sanction of her husband or father-in-law. Women shared the titles of their husbands and we find epithets like *Mahabhoji*, *Maharathini* and *Bhojiki* applied to them in the inscriptions.

The matrimonial customs of the time do not show any major change since the period of the *sutras* and early Buddhist works. Inter-class marriages were still frequently contracted and even marriage with foreigners was not looked down upon. On principle, Manu was opposed to the remarriage of widows, but the references to *Punarbhu* (a twice married woman) and her offspring in his *sastra* clearly indicate that reality did conform to his wish. He was also disgusted with *Niyoga* and reviled it as 'a despicable act, fit only for animals (*vigarhita pasudharma*)' but had to permit it in deference to the long standing of the practice. Yajnavalkya had no objection to *Niyoga* though he shared Manu's opinion about the remarriage of windows. The dreadful custom of *Sati* was apprently confined even now to the north-west. The early *smritis* are silent over it.

Among the numerous sculptural representations dating from this period, there is very little evidence for the prevalence of *purdah* or seclusion of women.[4] In a large number of cases, women are shown as naked to the waist, but it is controversial if this represents a phase of actual life. The various styles of dress adopted by them involved the use of bodice, skirt, head-dress, long tunic, jacket and plump shoes or slippers. The torso of a female figurine recovered during the excavations at Arikamedu near Pondicherry shows that in the southern part of the country the graceful *Sari* had come into vogue as early as the first century B. C. The head-dress and the long tunics were used by men also who seem to have generally attired themselves in a *dhoti* or loin-cloth with or without an *uttariya* or upper cloth. The Sakas and Kushanas brought with them the Central

Asian trousers, long coats and typical high boots. The trousers were adopted early by the Indian rulers and the Gupta emperors are often shown on their coins as clad in these. In contrast to the general scantiness of clothes, both men and women put on an impressive abundance of ornaments, including necklaces, bracelets, anklets, eardrops, jewelled girdles, heavy rings and strings of beads. 'Even kings wore ear-ornaments. The representations of Vasishthiputra Sri Satakarni and Sri Yajna Satakarni on their coins show us well-punched ears.'[5] The food habits of the people remained much the same as before. From a story current in Kapisa in the 7th century A. D. Hiuen Tsang got the information that the peach and the pear were grown for the first time in India by the royal hostages from Chinese Turkistan residing at the court of Kanishka, but the truth of this cannot be vouched for.

The unit of social life was, as ever, the joint family, consisting of the father, mother, grand-father and grand-mother (*Pitamaha* and *Pitamahi)*, son, daughter-in-law (*Vadhu*) and sometimes even the maternal grand-mother. Besides, there were also the slaves and servants attached to the more opulent households. As usual, the number of slaves was quite small and they were obtained by the same methods as before. Manu (VIII. 415) classifies the slaves under several categories, such as those captured in war (*dhvajahrita)*, those who worked as slaves for livelihood (*bhaktadasa)*, those given as presents (*datrima*), those acquired by inheritance (*paitrika)* and those reduced to slavery by judicial sentence (*dandadasa)*. The slaves led a moderately happy life in the homes of their masters and could acquire their freedom in the usual ways.

B. ECONOMIC

A number of historical factors enabled the mercantile community of the country to strengthen and expand its relations with the outside world despite the political uncertainties of the period. The occupation of large parts of North India by the Greeks, Sakas, Parthians and Kushanas who were already in intimate connection with foreign nations naturally opened up new possibilies and the joining up of the valleys of the Ganges and the Indus with those of the Oxus and the Tarim brought them into direct relation with the Silk Road, the great artery of commerce extending across Asia to

Europe. The establishment of the Roman Empire in the west, the emergence of Hinduised states in Indo-China and Indonesia and the spread of Buddhism to Chinese Turkistan and China, all these created conditions favourable to the growth of trade connections. Last, but not the least, the 'discovery' of the monsoon about the middle of the first century A. D. (47 A. D.) by the navigator Hippalus opened up a direct sea-route across the Indian ocean between India and the West, thus cutting down the duration of the voyage to Egypt from one year to three months and reducing the danger of pirates who harassed the ships that had to pass along the coast before this.

The great increase in the volume of the external trade of India due to the circumstances indicated above is attested by various authorities. It is said that on an average a ship a day left the ports of Egypt for the east after the discovery of Hippalus where only about twenty ships a year had made the voyage before it.[6] According to the *Periplus* (C. 70 A.D.), Indians, along with Greeks and Arabs, were settled in the island of Dioscorida (Socotra) 'to carry on trade there' and there is reason to belive that there were Indian colonists in Madagascar also. The chief customer of Indian merchandise in the west was the Roman Empire. The trade with Rome acquired such dimensions that we find Pliny (c. 80 A. D.) lamenting that nearly fifty million sesterces (half a millon sterling) were paid every year by the Romans to the Indians. Indian muslin flooded the markets of Rome and when its extensive use by the ladies developed into a threat to the city's morals its import had to be restricted by the Senate. That Pliny's complaint was not unfounded is borne out by the discovery of a large number of Roman coins in India, specially in the south.[7] Roman importers, or their agents, actually resided in settlements like Arikamedu on the Coromandel coast and may even have minted money locally to meet the demands of trade.

A part of the Indian trade with the west followed the land routes through Southern Persia and Mesopotamia to Palmyra in Syria. But the bulk of it was seaborne and converged on the great emporium of Alexandria in Egypt from a number of ports dotting the sea-coast of the country. A good account of these ports is given by the anonymous author of the *Periplus*

who visited India in the first century. A. D. The information supplied by the navigator shows that the main ports on the western coast were Barbaricum, Barygaza, Sopara, Kalyana, Muziris and Nalcynda. Barygaza (Broach) was the northernmost emporium of Dachinabades (Dakshinadesa or Dakshinapatha) and imported, among other things, Italian, Laodecian and Arabian wine, glass, antimony, copper, tin, rough cloth and beautiful maidens for the harems of the kings. The exports consisted chiefly of spikenard, pepper, ivory and silk. The principal feeding towns inland were Ozene (Ujjayini), Paithana (Pratishthana) and Tagara (probably modern Ter) but merchandise even from distant Kashmir and Hindukush found its way into Barygaza.

The ports on the eastern coast, such as Masalia near Masulipatam, also sent ships to the Arabian and Egyptian harbours. Arikamedu near Pondicherry was an important Roman trading station. But it appears that the main flow of commerce from this part was to the east. According to the *Periplus*, large ships called *colandia* sailed regularly from Indian ports to Chryse, i. e. Farther India, the Malay Peninsula and the Archipelago. Ptolemy (c. 150 A. D.) informs us that there was a direct voyage from the *aphetcrium* immediately to the south of Paloura (near Ganjam), to Malay Peninsula. From Tamralipti in the Midnapore District of Bengal ships passed to the east either along the coast of Bengal and Burma or directly across the Bay of Bengal. The strong lure of tin, precious metals, costly woods and spices had led to the establishment of a brisk commercial intercourse between India and the countries of South-East Asia which was further strengthened by the diffusion of Hindu cultural influence over these parts. We learn from the *Milindapanho* (c. 1st century A. D.) that from India one could take ship, among other places, for Alasanda (apparently Alexandria in Egypt), Suvarnabhumi and China. The intercourse of India with the last named country during this period is evidenced by other sources also. Thus, the envoy Chang-kien, visiting Bactria in c. 125 B. C., noted that bamboo and textile from China were brought to the local markets through Yunnan, Burma and India. The historian Pan-Ku (lst Cen. A. D.) deposes that the journey from South China to Kanchi (near Madras) took one year. The use of Chinese Silk in the country is attested by sculpture

in centres like Nagarjunikonda, Mathura and Amaravati.

The extensive fabric of the foreign trade referred to above was sustained partly by the brisk internal commercial activity centring round great towns like Purushapura, Taxila, Mathura, Kausambi, Pataliputra, Ujjayini and Pratishthana and partly by the flourishing state of industry and agriculture in the country. The numerous gifts and large donations by industrialists and craftsmen recorded in the epigraphs of the period reflect the high degree of prosperity attained by them. Inscriptions preserve the memory of pious endowments made by persons of the classes of *navakarmika* (superintendent of construction or edifices), *lohakara* (black-smith), *manikara* (jeweller), *hairanyaka* or *sauvarnika* (gold-smith) *gandhika* (perfumer), *rajaga* (washerman) *varddhaki* (carpenter), *sailarupakara* (sculptor or imagemakers) and a host of other professionals who apparently came of well-to-do families. Industrial life was marked by specialisation and localisation as in the Maurya period. To quote only a few examples, Vidisa seems to have been well known for its ivory work, Mathura for sculpture, Banaras for textile and Nepal for woollen wear. An old Tamilian reference suggests that the artisans of Magadha, smiths of Avanti, carpenters of Yavana and workmen of the Tamil country had acquired special renown for their craftsmanship. The guild organisation was strong in the various trades and crafts. We hear of guilds *(srenis)* of *tailapisakas* (oilmen), *odyantrikas* (hydraulic engineers), *dhamnikas* (corn-dealers), *gandhikas* (perfumers), *kolikanikayas* (weavers), *kasakaras* (braziers), *vamsakaras* (bamboo workers) and many others. The headmen of the guilds bore the usual designation of Setthi (Sreshthi). 'Guilds were autonomous bodies, having their own rules, regulations and bylaws which were usually accepted and respected by the state. Disputes among their members were settled by their own executive and not by the State tribunals'. The guilds not only protected the interests of their members and the consumers in general, but also served as banks in which money could be invested on interest. Ushavadata, the son in law of Nahapana, invested two thousand Karshapanas in one weaver's guild at Govardhana at 12% and one thousand Karshapanas at another guild at the same place at 9%. The credit of guilds as banks stood high and we find even foreigners making deposits with them[8]. Permanent deposits in the guilds were known as *akshayanivi* and all transactions with them

had to be registered in their offices which were probably located in the town-hall (*nigamasabha*).

The references in some inscriptions to donations made by persons of the *halika* (ploughmen) class suggest that the frequent political upheavals and disturbances of the time did not materially affect the conditions in the villages and the plight of the farmers continued to be the same as before. Some writers regard large-scale migrations due to increased pressure on land as a factor in the establishment of Indian 'colonies' in South-East Asia during this period, but there is no positive evidence of any such exodus.

C. ART

The political disintegration characterizing the five hundred years between the downfall of the Mauryas and the rise of the Guptas finds no reflection in the artistic and religious history of the period. The official tradition of columnar art established in the time of Asoka languished and may be said to have gradually died out but under the fostering care of the indigenous and foreign dynasties of rulers that followed the Mauryas, art flourished in many other forms, consolidating the old idioms and techniques and breaking forth into new modes which were to find full fruition sometime later.

In India, as elsewhere, art has always been the handmaid of of religion. As the period in question was marked by the preponderance of Buddhism, at least among the higher and more enlightened sections of the people, most of its artistic remains are connected with that faith. The fertilising influence of Buddism was strongly felt in the domain of art which registered marked growth in many different fields.

In important Buddhist centres like Sanchi, Bharhut and Amaravati, some of the existing *stupas* were renovated and extended with the addition of a stone encasement to cover the original brick core, and new and imposing structures, belonging to the same category, were erected. In its fully evolved from, the Buddhist *stupa* in India took the shape of a huge hemispherical mound or dome (*anda*), resting on a platform or plinth (*pithika*) and providing enough margin at the edge to serve the purpose of a path of circumbulation (*pradakshinapatha*) round the dome. The dome was topped by a 'gold-

house' *(harmika)*, a small closed-in space through the middle of which arose the *yashti* or mast 'which served as a support for tiers of circular umbrellas or Chhatras symbolising the *devalokas* or heavens of the gods culminating in the heaven of Brahma.'[9] The entire structure was surrounded by a railing *(vedika)* consisting of uprights *(stambha)* set up in the ground at equal intervals and joined by cross-bars *(suchi)* with a coping-piece *(ushnisha)* to top the whole thing. At the four cardinal points, or in one direction only, the railing was pierced by gates *(torana)* of which those at Sanchi are still standing and are justly famous for their artistic merit. The best preserved examples of the *stupa* art of this period are to be found at Sanchi, but there is little doubt that the most attractive edifice was the one at Amaravati (in the lower valley of the Krishna) of which the railings were made of marble and the dome was also covered with the same costly material. This great *stupa*, which 'must have produced a marvellous effect, when intact, is now in ruins and the *stnpa* at Bharhut also disappeared long ago. There were cther centres of *stupa* architecture in the lower Krishna region at places like Nagarjunikonda, Jagayyapeta and Ghantasala and *stupas* of a slightly different type were built in North-Westen India where a decided tendency to elongation was visible in the dome.

Great advance was recorded in the the sphere of 'rock-cut' architecture of which only a modest beginning had been made under Asoka. Numerous 'rock-sanctuaries' were excavated in the different parts of the country, the best known being those at Bhaja, Bedsa, Kondane, Nasik, Kanheri and Ajanta (caves 10 and 9) in the west and Udayagiri in the east. Most of these were meant for the use of Buddhist monks and were either *chaityas* (halls of worship) or *avasas* (residences for monks). The *chaitya* was a long, rectangular chamber, divided into a nave and an aisle by a row of columns and ending in an apse containing a small *stupa* for worship. The roof was sometimes a vaulted one, with some early examples showing carved 'ribs' in imitation of wooden prototypes. Entrance into the hall was gained by one or three doors cut into the front wall. The upper part of this wall contained a large, elegant window admitting a 'sufficient volume of mellow light to illumine the interior of the chamber, specially the *stupa* at the far end'. The window was usually in the shape of a horse-shoe and is accordingly described as

'horse-show window' though some writers prefer the name 'Chaitya window.' The finest specimen of the early *chaitya* halls of India is the one at Karle between Bombay and Poona. The architectual scheme of the *avasas* was simpler in comparison. It consisted of a central hall, with or without pillars, and small, dark cells cut into the walls on all sides. A narrow verandah was sometimes added in the front.

The rock-cut caves of this period differ from the earlier examples of the Maurya age not only 'by their more developed styles, but also by their rich decoration with sculpture.'[10] In fact, the distinguishing artistic achievement of the period may be said to have been in the domain of sculpture. The centres of stupa or cave architecture were also great centres of sculpture and most of these had their own distinctive peculiarities of style and technique. The sculptures on the railings and gateways of the great stupa at Bharhut, including many figures of *Yakshas*, *Yakshis*, *Nagas* and *Devatas* as also numerous scenes from the Jatakas and the Buddha's life, are marked by a freedom and natural quality of treatment which to some extent make up for the imperfect mastery of the artists over the human figures and it is said that 'some animals, such as elephants, deer and monkeys, are better represented there than in any sculptures know in any part of the world, and so too are some trees.' The human figures are better executed in the profusion of relief sculpture adorning the four gateways of the great stupa at Sanchi and likewise depicting many stories from the Jatakas and the Buddha's career. Essentially similar to those of Bharhut, the sculptures at Sanchi exhibit a marked improvement in technical skill. Both Sanchi and Bharhut may be regarded as the mirrors of Indian life in the centuries immediately preceding the beginning of the Christan era. The carvings at these places reflect life, as it was then lived, in its manifold and varied aspects, including 'domestic and sylvan scenes, processions, sieges and groups of ordinary and extraordinary animals.' Kings in their sophisticated courts and palaces, sages in their secluded hermitages, the affluent nagaraka in his urban surroundings, the homely peasant in his village home, the hunter on his lonely forest beats—all are depicted with a warmth and enthusiasm in strange contrast with the pessimistic spirit of the great monuments adorned by the scenes. A further advance in the sculptor's trade is reflected in the sulpture which once

covered the dome and the railings of the stupa at Amaravati and other lesser monuments of the Krishna Valley. 'The ivory-like delicacy and precision of the carvings, the languorous attenuated beauty of the figures, make the Amaravati reliefs the most voluptuous and the most delicate flower of Indian sculpture.'[11] Art was in a flourishing state at Mathura in the Jamuna Valley. In this ancient city which attracted followers of Brahmanical Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism alike, artists of these different faiths made ample use of the red sandstone of the neighbourhood to fashion out idols of their gods and goddesses, votive shrines, tablets and other objects of religious interest and these were sometimes taken to distant places like Kausambi and Sarnath. A great achievement of the Mathura school was the evolution of the Buddha's image. The earlier Buddhists of the Hinayana school were prevented from representing the Master iconically, but under the growing influence of Mahayana the Mathura studios discarded the restraint and began to produce his images in a large number.

They were the first to do so in the interior of India. But it is a moot point if the practice was taken up first by them or their co-workers of Gandhara in the north-west. The question has been debated long and earnestly and the opinion now appears to be gaining ground that the Buddha image was evolved about the same time, but independently of each other, in the Mathura and Gandhara schools. Whatever may had been the case, there is little doubt that the latter school represents the most important artistic development of the period and far outshines that of Mathura. It derives its name from the ancient province of Gandhara (Rawalpindi and Peshawar Districts) which was its main centre and is often described as 'Graeco-Buddhist' or 'Indo-Hellenistic' as it owed its origin to a mixture of the Indian and Hellenistic traditions. The chronology of this school and the actual circumstances of its inception and growth are a matter of keen controversy among scholars. Many writers believe that it developed under the impact of the Graeco-Bactrian art imported into India by the kings of the lines of Euthydemus and Eucratides. There is, however, no clear evidence that the Greek art in Bactria itself was ever so vigorous as to induce by its influence the birth of a remarkable school like Gandhara in India. It seems almost certain that the Hellenistic influence was brought to India, not from Bactria, but direct from the west and that it was under the fostering care, not of the Graeco-Bactrian kings, but of their foreign successors

that the distinctive style of Gandhara was evolved. No specimens of the art assignable to the period of Greek domination in Gandhara are known and few now place its beginning before the first century B. C. Some writers ascribe the Bimaran reliquary, one of the finest products of the Gandhara school, to about the middle of that century and certain pieces bearing dates in some unknown era (or eras) to the period about 1-70 A.D. Others, however, postulate a somewhat later date for the commencement of the Gandhara idiom and place its earliest definitely characterised objects in the time of Kanishka and his successors. It is not possible to examine these theories in detail here but considering that no images of Buddha seem to occur in the antiquities excavated at Sirkap in Taxila which probably flourished upto the time of the establishment of Kushana rule in Gandhara, the second view appears more probable than the first, though this may not be regarded as an unanswerable argument. Scholarly opinion is similarly divided about the time when the Gandhara Art went out of vogue, but we shall probably not be far in the wrong if we assign its end to c. 500 A. D.

The favourite medium of the Gandhara artists was blue schist or green phyllite at first but this was gradually replaced by stucco or lime plaster which began to be extensively used from the third century A. D. onwards. Metal was also employed, though evidently only sparingly, and a superb example of metal work is provided by the Bimaran reliquary, already referred to, a round box of pure gold repousse, inlaid with rubies.' Out of these various materials the sculptors fabricated numerous images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas and depicted in relief many episodes from the life of the Master and the Jatakas. The Buddha is shown in the seated or standing pose (the reclininig posture is reserved for the Nirvana scene), in most cases with the gestures of hand and fingers (*mudra*) known as *abhaya*, *upadesa*, *dharma-chakra-pravartana* and *bhumisparsa*. The head is covered with wavy or curled tresses gathered up in a conventionalised knot

at the top *(ushnisha)*. The lobes of the ears are generally elongated and the eyes are provided with sharply-marked brows separated by the *urna*, 'the third eye.' In many intances, the head is seen surrounded by a halo *(prabhamandala)* which is still unornamented. Some early examples represent the Master as wearing a moustache while in others he appears clean-shaven. The body is draped in garments showing schematic folds and in the better finished pieces its contour shows through them. Some good Buddha images of the Gandhara type have been recovered from Loriyan Tangai, Hashtnagar, Takht-i-Bahi, Hodd, Sahr-i-Bahlol and some other places. Few representations in the entire range of Indian art are more arresting than the Gandharan 'Emaciated Buddha', now housed in the Lahore Museum. The Bodhisattavas and other gods and goddesses also exhibit some of the above features in a greater or lesser degree. The narrative scenes in Gandhara are arranged with greater understanding and dexterity than in the early Indian schools of Sanchi, Bharhut and Mathura. The artists seem to have had a special preference for certain episodes from the Buddha's life, e-g., the Master attending the school as a pupil, the Great Departure and the sending of assassins by Devadatta. These scenes, it is pointed out, have certain special feature's distinguishing them from similar representations in the other centres of art in the interior of India where also they were favourite subjects of portrayal. The delineation of the animal figures, is said to be 'not quite upto the mark.'

The western inspiration of the Gandhara Art is undeniable. 'The modelling of the facial and anatomical features, the wavy treatment of the hair, the arrangement of the drapery, and the general balance of the body in the Buddha images, all strongly suggest the classical model.' Indeed, it has been remarked with some justification that the Gandhara Buddha is only 'Appllo in an unusual pose' and 'Indian

sages and priests and anchorites in the stories correspond to bearded philosophers and sages of the classical tradition ; yakshas, garudas, nagas and even Vajrapani with their usual attributes, are conceived and represented in terms of the bearded genii, Atlantes, Bacchants, Zeus, Herakles, Eros, Hermes or Poseidon'[12]. In the mass of sculptures, there occur many purely classical scenes, motifs and patterns. The Gandhara Art, Indian in spirit and ideas, is western in its form and treatment and it has actually been suggested that it may have been largely the work of West-Asian artists settled in the Punjab and N. W. F. Province. But it will perhaps be wrong to suppose that the Indian plastic tradition has been completely suppressed in Gandhara. It has been pointed out that there are also several examples in which 'not only the idea but design and working out as well of a certain religious secne, were simply copied from ancient national Art' and that 'we can therefore take for granted that the influence from India on Gandhara has been considerably greater than was generally assumed until now'.[13]

Opinion varies greatly,regarding the achievement of the Gandhara Art and its place in the evolution of Indian art as a whole. While some earlier critics regarded it as the 'finest art that ever developed inside the limits of India', the view has also found some support in the more recent years that it is 'a mere mitation of an imitation, the weak copy of a great art in decline'[14]. It has not infrequently been urged that it is essentially 'mechanical and unimaginative', turned out on a commercial scale rather than to fulfil a real aesthetic need. The truth seems to lie, as usual, midway between the two extremes. The Hellenistic tradition with its pronounced emphasis on physiognomical balance, was an inadequate, perhaps even inapt, vehicle of expression when applied to Indian subjects and ideas. The spirituality and supra-sensuous interest of the Buddha legend and cognate themes suffered in the hands of sculptors who concentrated their attention chiefly on the delineation of physical beauty and production of visual effect. But it is certain that, for sheer perfection of form, many of the Gandhara Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have never been approached in India and some of them, 'though lacking in the spirituality of the Gupta period, are gentle, graceful and compassionate'. Due to its predominantly Hellenistic character, the Gandhara school failed to penetrate deep into the interior of the country and remained more or less confined to the north-west. Some features of it may be traced in

Mathura school and its garland-bearing Erotes are to be found as far south as Amaravati, but its influence never became a decisive factor in the development of Indian art. As Sir John Marshall puts it, the Hellenistic art 'never took the real hold upon India that it took, for example, upon Italy or Western Asia, for the reason that the temperaments of the two peoples were radically different and dissimilar. To the Greek, man's beauty and intellect were everything and it was the apotheosis of this beauty and this intellect which still remained the key-note of Hellenistic art even in the Orient. But these ideals awakened no response in the Indian mind. The vision of the Indian was bounded by the immortal rather than the mortal, by the Infinite rather than the Finite. While the Greek thought was ethical, his was spiritual, where Greek was rational,his was emotional And to these higher aspirations, these more spiritual instincts he (the Indian) sought, at a later date, to weave articulate expression by translating them into terms of form and colour'. In the history of Indian Art, Gandhara has thus only a marginal importance'. But it must be added here that outside India, it wielded great influence and 'achieved a great success by becoming the parent of the Buddhist art of Eastern or Chinese Turkistan, Mongolia, China, Korea and Japan'.

Side by side with the sculptor, the clay-worker was also active. Large finds of terracotta figurines, both of the hand-made and moulded type, from the numerous excavated sites, specially places like Mathura, Kausambi, Pataliputra and Buxar in the Gangetic Valley, testify to the flourishing state of this 'poor man' s art'. From the Sunga-Kanva period onwards the output of the terracotta industry of the country becomes much more abundant than before. The modellers turned out figurines and plaques in large numbers which provide interesting material for the study of the social institutions and tendencies of the times While the old art forms and themes were still extensively employed, the influence of the Sakas, Parthians and Kushanas introduced new elements sharply distinguishable from the indigenous stream. Dwarfed drummers, votive tanks with or without a bird perched on the edge, heads and figures with a tall furrow cap rising to a point, horse-riders and many like items, quite unknown to the early Indian tradition, now make their appearance and are closely paralleled by finds recorded from Saka-Parthian sites like Seleucia on the Tigris and Dura in Western Asia.

The doubtful case of the supposed prehistoric rock-drawings of Central India apart, the earliest extant examples of Indian painting belong to this period. The rows of human figures, aquatic animals and geometrical patterns done in yellow and ochre earth colours, in the 'tempera' technique, on the vaulted ceiling of the Jogimara Cave in the Ramgarh Hills are now generally assigned to about the beginning of the Christian era. More than a century later, paintings exhibiting a considerably greater degree of mastery over technique and subject alike were executed to decorate the walls and ceilings of cave Nos. IX and X at Ajanta. An account of the Ajanta painting as a whole will be found at a later plaee.

Ivory-carvers of Central India and gem-engravers of the north-west did wonderful work. The mint-masters in the service of the Indo-Greek kings put some of the finest portraits of the ancient times on the coins fabricated by them. Many potters of the day were good artists and gave vent to their aesthetic impulses in the beautiful and varied designs of the utensils turned out by them. But in one respect the ceramic industry received a grave set-back. About 200-100 B. C. the remarkable Nothern Black Polished Ware which had been diffused over large areas of North India since c. 600 B. C. suddenly died out for reasons which are yet to be explained.

D. LITERATURE AND LEARNING

As in the field of art, so in that of literature, the political confusion of the period following the decline of the Mauryas did not impede the progress of the Indian civilisation. Literature flouished in all its various aspects, religious, philosophical, secular and technical, and the period produced some of the best known figures of the literary annals of India.

The epics continued to grow in volume until they attained their present bulk and were finally redacted in the extant form. Beginning was also made of the type of religious literature known as *Dharmasastra* or *smriti.* Metrical in form, the *smritis* follow the general didactic style of the epics and many of them are supposed to be based on earlier texts of the *sutra* schools. The dates of the extant *smritis* are uncertain, but it is generally thought that the earliest and the most famous of them, that of Manu, was composed between B.C. 200 and 200 A.D. and that the *sastra* of Yajnavalkya was also written

in or before the 3rd century A.D. As noted above, the *Manusmriti* or the *Manavadharmasastra* enjoys very high respect among the Hindus and is regarded as the epitome of the Brahmanical thought and tradition. Some of the ideas expressed by Manu on questions of social and religious organisation are highly unpalatable to the modern mind. He spoke ill of women, recommended the perpetual degradation of Sudras as a basic social fact, regarded all foreigners with obvious contempt and wrote with an almost unbalanced fervour in support of the superiority of the the Brahmanas and the efficacy of rituals. But there are nobler passages also in his work, breathing a spirit of lofty idealism and generosity, and one often does not know how to reconcile the two conflicting strains.

The development of the Buddhist and Jaina literatures continued uninterrupted. The consensus of opinion assigns the well-known Buddhist works *Milindapanho*, *Divyavadana*, *Lalitavistara* and *Saddharma-Pundarika* to this period and it is believed by some that the *Paumachariya* of Vimalasuri was also written about this time. An earlier stage in the development of the Buddha legend than the one reflected by the Lalitavistara and other Sanskrit works is represented by the Pali Nidanakatha forming an essential part of the Jataka commentary. Tradition affirms that the Buddhist canon was written down in Ceylon in the first Century B. C.

In secular literature, marked progress was registered in the field of *kavya* (poetry) and *nataka* (drama). It has been stated above that the first extant examples of a full sanskrit *kavya* are the *Buddhacharita* and *Saundarananda* of Asvaghosha who flourished at the court of Kanishka towards close of the first century A. D.[15] Asvaghosha's works possess all the ingredients of good poetry and are specially noted for their simple and effective diction. Their imagery and language impressed even Kalidasa and some of the verses of the great poet show clear traces of borrowing from them. The great Buddhist poet is also the first dramatist of India whose work has been preserved. He was the author of the *Sariputraprakarna* of which a manuscript was discovered at Turfan in Central Asia and also probably of two other dramas whose fragmentary manuscripts were also found at the same place. As a dramatist, he was excelled by Bhasa whose authorship of the thirteen Trivandrum plays, including the *Svapnavasavadattam*, *Pratijnayaugand-*

barayana and *Pratimanataka*, is now generally conceded by historians[15]. Another well known play wright sometimes assigned to the period, though nothing definite can be said on the question of his date, is Sudraka. The Mrichchhakatika of Sudraka has one of the best developed plots among sanskrit dramas and is also marked by other technical excellences which have secured for it a high place in Indian literature as a whole[16]. Secular literature was further enriched by the composition of the *Brihatkatha* of Gunadhya. The date of Gunadhya is not definite but there is fair agreement among scholars that his celebrated Paisachi work was written sometime during the first three centuries of the Christian era. The *Brihatkatha* is no longer extant but it is said to have provided material for the popular medieval works *Brihatkathamanjari* and *Kathasaritsagara*.

Though Patanjali' s *Mahabhashya*, the great commentary on the *Ashtadhyayi* of Panini, may contain some later material, it is fairly certain that Patanjali himself was a contemporary of Pushyamitra (c. 184-148 B. C.). Among the other technical writers of the age, mention may be made of the sage Garga who is said to have composed the astronomical work bearing his name (*Gargi Samhita*), Bharata, the author of the *Natyasastra*, the earliest extant work on dramaturgy, and Vatsyayana, the wirter of the famous *Kamasutra*. Charaka, the physician friend of Kanishka, produced the Samhita on *Vaidyaka* (medicine) called after him and Susruta, another well-known writer on medicine, was also a celebrity of the period.

In the domain of philosophy, famous names like those of Nagarjuna, Maitreyanatha, Aryadeva and Umasvati adorn the history of this period. The first of these was the founder of the Madhyamika school of Buddhism while the second was probably the earliest writer on the Yogachara school, Umasvati's Tattvarthadhigamasutra (c. 200 A. D.) provides a clear exposition of the fundanentals and practises of Jainism and is held in high regard by the Digambaras and Svetambaras alike. Asanga, the most authoritative expositor of Yogachara, also probably flourished about 300 A.D. In the opinion of some scholars, some of the *sutras*, expounding and systematising the six traditional schools of Hindu philosophy, were composed in this period. But by far the most important philosophical work of the time is the *Bhagavad-gita* or the Song Divine, described as the 'crest-jewel of Indian thought', and incorporated in the Mahabharata. The date of this celebrated poem is involved in

27

discussion, but the most reasonable view seems to be that it was composed sometime during the two centuries immediately preceding the Christian era. It is held in the highest esteem in the country not only because Vyasa, the traditional author of the Mahabharata, declares it to have emanated from the lips of Lord Krishna himself, but also because it is supposed to mark the very consummation of India's spiritual wisdom. 'It blends together the *Pravritti* of the Vedas and the Nivritti of the Upanishads, compromises the dichotomy of the non-Vedic schools of ancient India with the monism of Vedanta and establishes the validity of all the three courses (*yogas*) of *Bhakti*, *Jnana* and *Karma* without affirming the superiority of any over the others. And in all this it stands out as the most impressive manifestation of India's spirit of synthesis'. Its insistence on the disinterested performance of one's duty has produced a deep impression on the minds of many thinkers and in its teachings some thoughful critics find a solution of the ideological crisis of today which, according to them, 'is merely the psychological crisis of Arjuna writ large. '

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Manu, X, 8-20.
2. Sankaistu kriyalopad ima Kshatriyajatayah, Vrishalatvam gata loke Brahmanadarsanena cha.
3. Yatra naryastu pujyante ramante tatra devata.
4. Purdah, however, was observed to some extent in the aristocratic circles. As pointed out already, there are references to it in the Epics. In the Lalitavistara we read that Gopa, the betrothed of the Buddha, refused to put on a veil on the occasion of her marriage when asked to do so. The use of Purdah is also indicated by the dramas of Bhasa.
5. K. Gopalchari, Early History of Andhradesa, p. 159
6. AIu, p. 621
7. For a detailed study of Roman coins in India, see JRAS 1904, pp. 591 ff.
8. cf. The Mathura Inscription of the year 28 of Huvishka in which a 'Lord of Kharasalera and Vakan' (possibly Wakan in Central Asia) makes a permanent deposit (akshaya.nivi), obviously with a local guild.
9. Benjamin Rowland, The Art and Arthitecture of India, p. 44.
10. R. C. Majumdar, Ancient India, p. 236.

11. Coomarswamy, History of Indian and Indonesian Art, p. 71.

12. AIU, p. 520.

13. 'The Scythian Period', p. 82.

14. AIU, p. 519.

15. The date of Bhasa is controversial. But as he is referred to by Kalidasa who probably flourished in the fourth century A. D. and as his Prakrit appears to be later than that of Asvaghosha (c. 100 A.D.), he may be placed in the 2nd or 3rd Century A. D. See, AIU, p. 261.

16. According to tradition, Sudraka was a king. The plot of his play is taken from the Charudatta of Bhasa.

CHAPTER VI

Religion

Many important kingly families which ruled in the interior of India after the downfall of the Mauryas, such as those of the Baimbikas, Sungas, Kanvas, Satavahanas and Vakatakas, favoured the Brahmanical religion as against the Mauryas who inclined more towards the heterodox faiths. Under their inspiration, Brahmanism began to recover from the shock it had received from the growth of Buddhism and Jainism in the preceding epoch and there commenced an era of orthodox reaction which reached its culmination in the Gupta Age. But at the same time, the non- Brahmanical creeds were also not without their royal supporters. Buddhism specially received the patronage of not a few rulers of the period, including some foreign invaders of the north-west two of whom, Menander and Kanishka, are remembered as great votaries of the Buddha's teaching, Royal patronage thus being evenly balanced, it was only by slow degrees that Brahmanism could retrieve the lost ground and its triumph did not become complete until the Gupta Age was already fairly well advanced.

Kings of the Baimbika, Satavahana, Pallava, Naga and other dynasties celebrated Vedic rites like Asvamedha, Rajasuya, Vajapeya, Agnyadheya, Aptoryama, Satatiratra and Brihaspatisava on a grand scale, granting large fees in the form of villages, money, cattle, horses, elephants and so on to the priests officiating at them. On one occasion alone, a Satavahana prince gave away as many as 11000 cows and 1000 horses, besides much else, as *dakshina* or sacrificial fee to the Brahmanas. The common people also performed many lesser rites, including those of a magical or mystical character. The testimony of the epigraphs shows that the worship of the old Vedic gods like Indra, Varuna and Yama had not fallen into total disuse. But there is no doubt that the strictly 'Vedic' or orthodox sacrificial cult was now gradally receding into the background and the devotional adoration of Vishnu and Siva was coming to the forefront in the

Brahmanical Hindu fold. Vaishnavism was already making conquests even among the foreigners of the north-west and we learn from the Besnagar Garuda Pillar Inscription that Heliodorus, a Greek resident of Taxila, was a devotee of Vasudeva whom he regarded as the highest among gods (*Devadeva*). There now existed temples devoted to the worship of Vishnu at places like Nagari and Vidisa in Central India and the wide prevalence of the Vaishnava faith in the Deccan is testified to not only by the mention of Vasudeva and Samkarshana (Balarama) among the adorable gods in the epigraphs, but also by the popularity of such names as Vishnudatta, Vishnupalita and Gopala there. The period in question is one of great significance in the history of Vaishnavism as the composition of the Bhagvadgita, containing the earliest and the best exposition of its tenets, is usually assigned to it. The doctrine of the Four *Vyuhas* (*Chatur-Vyuha*), not alluded to in the Gita but forming an important feature of Vaishnavism, was probably developed in the period. Side by side with that of Vishnu, the worship of Siva (Mahadeva, Mahesvara etc.) also acquired further popularity. Dr. Bhandarkar points out that in the Deccan Saivism seems to have been more popular than Vaishnavism, if names can be taken as evidence. 'Such names as Bhutapala, Mahadevanaka, Sivadatta, Sivaghosha, Sivapalita, Sivabhuti, Bhavagopa and so forth clearly show that this god was popularly worshipped under four names, viz. Siva, Mahadeva, Bhava and Bhutapala. That his vehicle, the Bull, was also adored may be seen from the names Nandin, Rishabhanaka and Rishabhadatta. The names Skandapalita, Sivaskandila and Siva-skanda show that the god Skanda (Karttikeya) was worshipped both separately and conjointly with Siva'.[1] Like Vishnu, Siva also had his special devotees smong the foreign settlers of the country, the best known case being that of Wema Kadphises on whose coins is often found a representation of the God grasping a trident and battle-axe, and the epithet 'Mahisvara' (Mahesvara or devote of Siva) in the Kharoshthi legend on the reverse. Both Saivism and Vaishnavism had by now spread to the Far South and commanded wide vogue there, inspiring many saints and poets by their strong emotional appeal. 'In the Tamilakam of seventeen hundred years ago, men and women of different faiths Jains, Buddhists, Saivites and Vaishnavites—seem to have lived together in harmony and understanding'.[2]

The growing hold of devotional theism, possibly coupled with the

spread of Buddhism among the masses, made it imperative for the creed to 'change its aspect' and offer something warmer and of more genuine human interest than the cold rationality of the original faith. It has been pointed out that though the devotional element had never been prominent in Hinayana, it had never been actually absent in it. The early Buddhists were forbidden to make iconic representations of the Master, but they could, and did, worship him in the form of symbols. The strict theory of Hinayana never claimed a divine character for the Buddha, but not long after his death, if not actually in his life time, he had begun to be regarded as more or less superhuman by many of his followers. Even the Pali scriptures inculcated the belief that pilgrimages to the places sanctified by his association, specially the localities of his Birth, Enlightenment, First Sermon and Nirvana, led to the generation of great merit. From a quite early period, the adoration of *stupas* and *chaityas* was an established feature of Buddhism and by the time of Asoka the cult of the worship of the previous Buddhas had also come into vogue. A theistic element had thus been evolving in Buddhism for a long time. But it was only about the beginning of the Christian era that it acquired full importance, presumably as a result of the impact of the Brahmanical theistic influences. Its increasing intensification gave rise to a new school in Buddhism called Mahayana or the Great Vehicle to distinguish it from the orthodox school which now came to be known as Hinayana, the Lesser Vehicle.

The theory and practice of Mahayana show a considerable divergence from Hinayana. While the latter emphasises spiritual advancement though personal effort as the only means of salvation, Mahayana also relies on devotion to, and worship of, the Buddha as leading to the same goal. As in Vaishnavism and Saivism, this attitude naturally resulted in the introduction and popularity of image-worship. The Buddhist sculptors and artists, accustomed so far to representing the master by symbols only, now turned their hand to the production of his images the earliest of which were fabricated in Mathura and Gandhara. The ritual of worship gradually became as elaborate as in Hinduism and a complex code of ceremonies, formulae and charms was evolved.

The Buddha, who thus received the devotion and supplications of his Mahayanist followers, was naturally not the mere human teacher of the early creed. The new sect invested him with full

deity and raised him to the status of God. The mythology of Mahayana taught that 'Gautama Buddha had not been a mere man, but the earthly expression of a mighty spiritual being endowed with three bodies known as *Dharmakaya* (Body of Essence), *Sambhogkaya* (Body of Bliss) and *Nirmanakaya* (CreatedBody).'3 *Dharmakaya* of Mahayana appears to be a concept similar to *Brahman* of the Upanishads, meant to denote the Ultimate principle of the universe, penetrating and giving rise to everything else. The Body of Bliss is the presiding deity of the high heaven, Sukhavati. The Created Body is the corporeal form in which the Buddha is incarnated from time to time on the earth. In this threefold aspect, He rules supreme over the universe.

Another feature distinguishing Mahayana from the Lesser Vehicle is its Bodhisattva doctrine. While the older conception placed the ideal of 'Arhant' before the aspirants, the new school urged them to strive for Bodhisattvahood. The 'Arhant' is a spiritually elevated being who has acquired Sambodhi (full enlightenment) and is freed from the necessity of rebirth. He has worked out his own calvation and can assist others only by his example. The Mahayana Bodhisattva. on the other hand, is more active in the service of suffering humanity, By the cultivation of the *Paramitas* or the Highest Virtues he has also arrived at the point of spiritual advancement where he can immediately enter Nirvana. But in his infinite mercy and compassion, he does not choose to do so und instead stays in *Samsara* so that he might help others to achieve the goal. He suffers to serve others and goes on distributing his own spiritual merit among them so that they might attain liberation more quickly than by their own unaided exertion. Avalokitesvara, Padmapani Vajrapani and many others are in this way engaged in assisting human beings and other creatures and will continue to do so until all of them are emancipated. Bodhisattvahood is a practical ideal which, according to the texts, can be realised by all.

Whatever the traditional defintion may be, it is largely by the concept of the compassionate Bodhisattvas that the name 'Mahayana' acquired by the new school of Buddhism is justified. It holds out the hope of salvation to the the 'great many'(*bahujana*)

as against the older Buddhism of the Lesser Vehicle which could boast of only a small number of *Arhants* or *Pratyeka Buddhas* and it directs the attention of the individual to the welfare of 'the many' in place of his single self. The appellation Mahayana may have an organisational significance also. By replacing the dry intellectualism of Hinayana by a technique of warm devotion it was expected to make Buddhism, and rightly so, acceptable to a larger number of people than might otherwise have cared for it. The appeal of the Lesser Vehicle was to the intellect; that of the Greater Vehicle, to emotion. And it was this contrast that enabled the latter to cast its influence wider than the former among the peoples of the world.

Mahayana became a recognised doctrine of Buddhism about the beginning of the Christian era, although in an incipient form it seems to have existed from an earlier period. 'It would appear from the account of Kanishka's council, as given by Paramartha and Taranath, that Mahayanism was already a living force. Taranath also tells us that, during the reign of Kanishka's son, the teaching of Mahayana had greatly advanced and that various Mahayana texts were composed by the younger monks without any dispute with the elderbrethren.' The definite formulation of the new school as a branch of Buddhism thus seems to have taken place about the same time when the fourth council was held in the reign of Kanishka, but the position of the supporters of Mahayana in relation to it is difficult to ascertain. From the extant information no definite opinion can be formed about its nature and achievements. Hiuen Tsang tells us that it met, at the initiative of Kanishka and Parsva, in the Kundalavanavihara in Kashmir but Taranath locates its venue in Jalandhar. The deliberations of the council seem to have been dominated by monks of the Sarvastivadin sect of Hinayana. This, coupled with the silence of the Ceylonese Chronicles about it, has led some to conclude that it was a sectarian affair of the Sarvastivadins, ignored by other Buddhists, and that Kanishka may not have been directly associated with it, as alleged by the sources. Others, however, regard it as a general assembly for resolving the dissensions of the Sangha and preparing authentic versions of the sectarian views held by the various groups. According to Hiuen Tsang, it produced commentaries on the Sutta, Vinaya

and Abhidhamma. Taranath, apparently following a less reliable source, deposes that it proceeded with the work of putting to writing the whole of the Vinaya and parts of Sutta and Abhidhamma which had not yet been written out. He also says that the council recognised all the eighteen sects of Buddhism as professing the true doctrine of the Buddha. According to common notion, the official recognition of Mahayana was a consequence of the council's decision.

We have seen above that Buddhism had already spread to Ceylon, Afghanistan, and *possibly* Burma and Nepal, in the Maurya period. In the Kushana age it was introduced in Khotan, Kashgar and other countries of Chinese Turkistan and further beyond in China itself. As early as 2 B. C., a Yueh-chi chief, probably Kadphises I, is said to have communicated some Buddhist scriptures to China. The work of the active propagation of Buddhism there was, however, probably begun by the sages Kasyapa Matanga and Dharmaratna who arrived in the country in c. 60 A. D. The cultural influence of India was being strongly felt in South-East Asia at this period and one of its most concrete manifestations was the advent of Buddhism and Brahmanism. It has been pointed out that images of the Buddha in the Amaravati style are found in places in Siam, Annam, Sumatra, Java and Celebes, clearly showing that by the 2nd or 3rd century A. D. Buddhist influence had penetrated to the coast of the China Sea and the Indian Archipelago. Early inscriptions, sculptures and literary references also testify to the prevalence of Vaishnavism, Saivism and sacrificial Brahmanism in Indo-China and the Indonesian islands. At the beginning of the fifth century A.D., when Fa-hien passed through Java on his way back to China, he noted that there were 'many forms of error and Brahmanism prevalent there.'

While the Indians carried their culture and religions to other countries, missionaries of non-Indian creeds also sought to secure a footing in India. The account of the evangelising activities of St.

Thomas found in the apocryphal *Acts of Judas Thomas the Apostle* tells us that the apostle converted the Indian king Gudnaphar and his brother Gad shortly after the Crucifixion. Gudnaphar is usually identified with the Indo-Parthian Gondophernes who mounted the throne in 19 A. D. and ruled at least upto 45 A. D. and it is believed that Gad is a variant of the name of Guda or Gudana who is associated with him on coins. Though the Syriac version of the Acts existed as early as the 3rd century A. D. doubts have been raised about the trustworthiness of the story by many authorities (EHI[3], pp. 281 ff.). It, however, appears certain that Christian missionaries visited India and small Christian communities were established in the country before the end of the second century. We learn from Eusebius (3rd century) that Pantaenus, who went to spread Christianity in India in that century, found that ministers of the Gospel had been there before him and had converted some Indians. 'The Christian church was firmly established in South India during the two succeeding centuries and we have reference to it in the *Romance History of Alexander* of the Pseudo-Kallisthenes (5th century A. D.)'. Another early allusion to Christianity in India occurs in the Christian Geography of Cosmos Indicopleustes (6th century) who informs us that there were churches in Malabar and Ceylon. These were in the hands of Persian priests and were supervised by a Persian bishop at Kalliana, identified by some with modern Kochin. The early Christians of India evidently belonged to the Nestorian heresy. But their number was small and it was only with the coming of the Europeans centuries later that Christianity began to acquire some importance in the couttry.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Ind. Ant., 1919, p.78
2. AIU.,p. 112
3. Basham, The Wonder That Was India, p. 276
4. Basham, p. 343

APPENDICIES

I

THE SOURCES

By S. K. Srivastava, M.A.

A critical study of the sources is the most essential pre-requisite for a student of ancient Indian history, for only then can one have a correct appraisal of the nature of materials which are available to us for reconstructing an outline of our past history. Although the study of ancient Indian history has reached a fairly advanced stage and the main events and happenings of our past have been told with a tolerable degree of certainty and within a more or less definite chronological framework, there are still many gaps which are yet to be bridged.

The main difficulty that confronts a baffled historian is the lamentable paucity of historical accounts for this period. This is somewhat of an enigma that while ancient India can justly boast of a vast and varied literature, unsurpassed even by the literary products of classical Greece and Rome, there is an utter lack of historical literature in the true sense of the term. Various explanations have been offered by scholars for this strange phenomenon. It has been argued that the ancient Indians were temperamentally averse to worldly matters which they considered to be of little importance. The writers usually maintain a conspiracy of silence over the events of their personal life as well as over the political condition of the country of their time. But this argument cannot be sustained in view of the wonderful progress made by Indians in various other branches of secular literature. Some believe that historical literature did exist, that records were laboriously prepared and regularly maintained, but they "perished almost completely in consequence of the climate and of the innumerable political revolutions from which India has suffered". This is true that Indian literature has suffered greatly and some of the literary works are permanently lost to us, but it seems quite strange to argue that there was wholesale destruc-

tion of historical literature inasmuch as we do not get any work except perhaps the metrical chronicle of Kashmir which throws sufficient light upon our past history. The absence of any reference to historical works in the extant literature cuts at the very root of such a hypothesis. It has also been plausibly suggested that Indian literature was written mostly by the Brahmins or by the Buddhist or Jain monks whose main preoccupation was to represent their respective systems of faith rather than to narrate the political events of their times. Whatever might have been the precise reason, it is undoubted that Indians failed to produce historical works like those of Herodotus or Thucydides. But this does not mean that Indians developed no historical sense. That they had is evident from the fact that even in the Vedic texts we find geneaological lists (vamsas) of teachers and pupils, apart from the family geneaologies indicated by gotras and pravaras. A more definite approach to history in Vedic times can be found in the gathas and narasamsis which were songs and ballads in praise of kings and which may be proved by references in Vedic Samhitas and Brahmanas to relate to historical characters and incidents. Then there were other classes of composition under the name of Itihasa and Purana, which in point of importance were considered next only to the four Vedas. Although the historical traditions preserved in the Vedic and other works testify to the existence of historical sense among the Indians from the earliest times, they lose much of their historical value because of the admixture of mythology, supernatural forces dominating the affairs of human beings, their obvious neglect of chronology and topography. This is true that these defects were not uncommon in the historical literature of other countries. The tragedy with the Indians was that they did not develop this literature beyond this rudimentary stage.

Although the direct contribution of literary sources to the reconstruction of ancient Indian history is much too scanty and of little importance, it is undoubted that their indirect value to the historian can hardly be exaggerated. The Vedas represent the earliest literature of India and our knowledge of Indo-Aryans is mainly derived from them. The Rigveda, the oldest Veda, is simply a collection of hymns by a number of priestly families, to be recited at sacrifices to gods. It is therefore poor in historical data. If it

refers to historical incidents, it is purely incidental, is often mixed up with mythological details and pays little attention to the topography of the events it relates. But some of the Rigvedic hymns vividly describe historical events like the battle of the ten kings against king Sudas who won a glorious victory. The successive stages of the battle of the Dasarajna, the march of the confederates, the panic caused thereby in the Sudas' army, the sudden turn of fortune and the final defeat of the allies are presented to us with much realism. Among the other Vedas, Samaveda and Yajurveda do not supply us with any historical traditions, other than those quoted to illustrate the advantages which accrue to the sacrificer, from the performance of sacrifices. Atharvaveda is important in the sense that it describes the popular beliefs and superstitions of the common people, although it is very sparing in its references to historical traditions. Next to the Samhitas are the Brahmanas which deal entirely with sacrificial rituals, and the Upanishads which expatiate on the quest of the higher knowledge in contrast to the sacrificial lore of the Brahmanas. In these works also we notice a number of historical traditions, for example, the story of the tournament held by King Janaka of Videha where Yajnavalkya took part in the discussion.

Apart from the historical traditions that we find scattered in Vedic literature, we find great help from the long lists of kings and dynasties, as preserved in the Puranas and the epics. Pargiter was the first scholar who demonstrated the historical importance of the epic and Pauranic traditions. He postulated the existence of 'two great streams of distinct traditions, the Brahmanic and the Kshatriya tradition. Brahmanic tradition according to him is embodied in Vedic literature which confines itself to religious subjects and notices political and secular occurrences only incidentally so far as they have a bearing on the religious subjects. There was the other tradition dealing with the Kshatriyas and the great part which they played in the political life of the country. There is great force in the argument that the original Puranas were of Kshatriya and not of Brahmanic origin, for the Sutas, its first authors, were born of Kshatriya father and Brahmana mother. They were entrusted with the task of preserving historical traditions in praise of their patron kings. Later on, the Puranas fell into the hands of the priestly class, especially the temple priests who Brahmanised the whole literature of the Puranas, so much so that the historical tradition regarding princes and dynas-

ties disappeared and its place was taken by legends about holy places and hymns in praise of sectarian gods. According to the classical definition, the Puranas were supposed to deal with five topics : (1) Sarga, the creation of the universe, (2) Pratisarga, the recreation of the universe at the close of each day of Brahma ; (3) Vamsa, the geneaologies of gods and sages ; (4) Manvantara, the groups of Mahayugas, in each of which mankind is produced from Manu, (5) Vamsanucharita, the history of the royal families who rule over the earth during the four ages. The Puranas do not actually conform to this scheme ; only seven out of the eighteen Puranas deal with the fifth topic which is really of much interest to the historian, containing an account of kings who have reigned during the historical period. Opinions have always differed about the authenticity of these lists of kings and dynasties given in the Puranas and the epics, but modern scholarship has tended to attach much importance to these traditions. Although the accounts of the Puranas are discrepant and totally ignore chronology and do not distinguish between history and mythology, their historical value is indubitable. For they constitute our only source for the reconstruction of ancient history before 6th century B. C. They also supply us with valuable information about the political history of India from the 6th century B. C. to the rise of the Guptas, although this information is further supplemented and corroborated by Buddhist and Jain literature and by incidental references in other literary works.

From the time of the Guptas onwards, we do not get even such dynastic lists as contained in the Puranas. Indian literature is quite silent, only a few works like biographies and local chronicles come to our rescue and help us to enliven the skeleton of political history based mainly upon inscriptions. Among biographies we can mention Harsacharita of Banabhatta, Gaudavaho of Vakpati, Vikramankadevacharita of Bilhana, Nasahasankacharita of Padmagupta etc. These biographies contain much historical information, but they cannot be regarded as genuine history as their main object was to glorify their heroes and raise them to the skies or to show the literary skill of their authors. Among local chronicles, the Rajatarangini occupies the foremost place, being the only work in ancient Indian literature which has the nearest approach to history. Although the earliest portion of this work is untrustworthy, it gradually

approaches a historical character when it deals with the history of Kashmir from seventh century A. D. onwards. We also get a number of chronicles of Gujrat which supply us with valuable details for reconstructing the history of that province. For the history of Nepal we get a number of Vamsabalis which give a connected history of Nepal from the earliest times, but scholars have shown the legendary character of their accounts and the fictitious nature of their chronology. The history of Sind from the 7th century down to its conquest by the Arabs is found in a Persian work known as Chachnama which in its turn was probably based upon the local chronicles of Sind. The existence of such local chronicles in Kashmir, Gujrat, Nepal and Sind leads us to believe that probably the Hindu kingdoms maintained official chroniclers whose duty it was to record and keep the annals of the state.

Next to the evidence of ancient Indian literature, we have the valuable accounts of foreign writers. Among the earliest writers who give substantial accounts of India are Herodotus and Ktesias. Herodotus who is commonly regarded as the father of history, wrote his monumental work 'Historica' which partakes of the character of universal history, giving account of the history of various nations. Although Herodotus showed his critical capacity in ample measure, his account of India was based on hearsay and oral accounts. Ktesias who was the court physican of the Persian Emperor Artaxerxes, had the opportunity of knowing India through Persian officials but his accounts have been disfigured by monstrous statements and fabulous stories. More valuable information is furnished by those companions of Alexander who wrote about India, namely Nearchus, Onesicritus and Aristobolus. The accounts of these historians are mostly true, their aim being to acquaint their countrymen with a true account of India. Their accounts were further supplemented by the books of Megasthenes and others who were sent as ambassadors by Hellenistic kings to India and had the privilege of residing in India for a number of years during which they learnt much about Indian life and society. The account of Megasthenes, known as Indica, is lost but some of its extracts are to be found in the writings of later historians, like Strabo and Arrian. Megasthenes' account has often been regarded untrustworthy but this charge applies only to what he has written from hearsay. We must treat as fairly reliable those portions which he has written from personal observation, although they also suffer from the limita-

tions of a Greek writer who was ignorant of the language, customs and religious beliefs of the Indian people and who had a natural tendency of seeing Indian institutions from a Hellenic point of view. In this connection we can also mention the accounts of classical writers like the anonymous writer of 'Periplus of the Erythraean sea', Ptolemy who wrote his 'Geography', in the second century A. D., Pliny who wrote his 'Natural History', and finally Cosmos of Alexandria who got the title of Indikopleustos, whose work sheds much light upon the geography and natural history of India and contains interesting information about the trade and commerce of ancient Indians.

Although Chinese historians from about 120 B. C. are of some help to us, it is to the Chinese pilgrims particularly to Fahien, Hiuen Tsang and I-tsing that we are indebted for supplying us valuable information about India. These Chinese pilgrims had spent several years in learning the Indian languages and had travelled almost throughout the country visiting important places of pilgrimage. Regarding the pilgrimage of Hiuen Tsang, Cunningham justly observes that it 'forms an epoch of as much interest and importance for the ancient history and geography of India as the expedition of Alexander the Great'. But these Chinese pilgrims were devout Buddhists, so they write mostly about the Buddhist holy places and do not care to enlighten us on the political condition of the period. Only Hiuen Tsang gives a graphic account of the political condition of India of his time and vividly describes the doings of his patron-king Harsavardhana Siladitya. Zealous as they were in the cause of Buddhism, the Chinese pilgrims have made exaggerated statements about the state of Buddhism, giving all other religions a definitely subordinate place.

It is fortunate that when the accounts of Chinese travellers stop supplying us historical information about India, we find much help from the narratives of Muslim writers. Arab sailors and merchants like Sulaiman and Al-Masudi wrote interesting accounts of India. The Arab chroniclers have vividly described the conquest of the Indian borderland by the Muslims. The greatest of Muslim writers was perhaps Alberuni who wrote his erudite work Tahqiq-i-Hind in 1030 A. D. He made a thorough study of Indian culture, mastered Sanskirit language and made a deep study of the different branches

of Sanskrit literature. He was free from religious fanaticism and feelings of racial superiority with the result that he was successful in writing a comprehensive work on Indian life and civilisation. While he wrote much on Indian mathematics, science, philosophy, religion and society, he wrote little of the political condition of India. The most distinctive service rendered by these foreign accounts to the reconstruction of ancient Indian history is that their known dates enable us to work out a more or less definite chronology for *some* phases of our past history. The most serious handicap is the distortion of names in these non-Indian accounts which make the work of identification very difficult.

It is true that we get useful historical information from ancient Indian literature and from the accounts of foreigners, but the information furnished by them does not enable us to form a connected account of our past. Here we are helped by archaeological evidence which constitutes the most authentic source of ancient Indian history. While the literary sources have been almost exhausted and the foreign accounts are not likely to yield much fruit, a vast field of research and exploration stretches before the archaeologist. Although in recent times scholars have recognised the importance of archaeological exploration and excavations, there is still much to be done. In spite of this fact, whatever work has been done so far in shape of studying inscriptions, coins and other archaeological remains, has enabled us to reconstruct our past history on a sure and sound basis. The inscriptions have proved very helpful for reconstructing the political history of ancient times, especially from the time of the rise of the Guptas when we do not even get dynastic lists of the type found in the Puranas and epics. Their historical value is definitely greater than the evidence of literary texts. The inscriptions are contemporary records while the evidence of literary works is often much later than the actual events which they relate. While the texts of the epigraphs have been preserved free from all modifications and additions, the literary works have been modified and tampered with through the ages, thereby detracting much from their authenticity. The date of the inscriptions is easily ascertainable either from their internal evidence or by a study of the character of the script in which they have been recorded, while the most distinctive feature of Indian literature is the uncertainty of its date of composition.

The earliest inscriptions that have something to do with the unravelling our past are the inscriptions found at Boghaz-koi, containing the names of some Vedic deities, namely Indra, Varuna and the twin Nasatyas. These inscriptions date from about 1400 B. C. and enable us to ascertain the time of Rigveda. Again, the inscriptions of the Achaemenids help us in tracing the extent of Persian dominion in the north-west of India. But it is from the time of Asoka that we really perceive the historical value of inscriptions The Asokan inscriptions have been found engraved on rocks and pillars throughout his vast dominions. They are almost unique and although they are in the shape of royal edicts and proclamations, they give us a glimpse of the spiritual greatness of the greatest ruler that ever sat upon the throne, besides furnishing us abundant materials for the history of his reign. The language of these inscriptions is Magadhi which was perhaps the official language of the Maurya court. The inscriptions found in Shahbazgarhi and Mansehra have been written in the Kharosthi script which was in use in the north-western part of India for many centuries. All the other inscriptions of Asoka are written in the one or the other variety of Brahmi script from which have evolved all the Indian alphabets found today.

Among the inscriptions of the post-Asokan period, which are very useful from the historical point of view, the important *ones* are those official records or *Prasastis* which contain an elaborate account of the achievements of victorious kings. In this category we can mention the Hathigumpha Inscription of king Kharvela, the Junagarh Inscription of Rudradaman, the Nasik Cave Inscription of the Satavahana king Vasisthiputra Pulumavi, the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta, the Aihole Inscription of the Chalukya king Pulakesin II, to name only a few. The importance of these prasistis is clear from the fact that some of them, e.g., the Allahabad Pillar Inscription, preserve the achievements of great rulers like Samudragupta whose very names were lost to Indian literature. Although these *prasastis* contain a good deal of exaggeration, it is quite safe to accept the specific details of wars, conquests and victories as fairly true. We have to take the conventional eulogies of the kings by their court poets or officials with a grain of salt but we can put greater reliance upon their specific achievements, because their authors could not possibly make false statements in public records. The

other type of official records are royal charters recording the sale or gift of lands, which are mostly found engraved on copper plates. In the preamble of these landgrants the names and achievements of the ruler and his ancestors are often related in a set pattern. Therefore this portion is very valuable to the student of political history. The other portions of such records supply valuable evidence for the social and economic conditions of the period and the region to which they belong. Besides official records, we get a large number of private records which are not of much help for reconstructing the political history of the country. But for a student of ancient Indian art and religion, some of them are of immense value. For the sake of illustration, we can mention the Bensnagar Garuda Pillar Inscription of Heliodorous It throws much light upon the state of Bhagavata religion in second century B. C. and the discovery of this solitary inscription once for all silenced those scholars who believed that Bhagavata religion was derived from Christianity.

Besides inscriptions, the testimony of coins is also very helpful to the historian of ancient India. It has not merely a corroborative value but it actually helps us to reconstruct history. We could have known little of the rule of Indo-Bacterian kings if we have not had the testimony of their coins. The Greek writers have preserved brief notices of some four or five kings but the study of coins reveals the existence of no less than thirty-seven Indo-Greek kings who ruled for more than two centuries. Similarly we would not have even heard of Indo-Scythian rulers like Vonones, Spalirises, Azes I, Azilises and Azes II etc. if their coins were not available to us. The coins not only mention their names but also enable us to trace the order of succession. In connection with the Western Kshatrapas of Kathiawar, we find that the coins not only give the name and designation of the ruler and of his father but also specify dates which enable us to fix the order of succession and to know sometimes the exact year in which one Kshatrapa was succeeded by another. The coins also enable us to trace the history of various Indian dynasties and republics that flourished during the period before the rise of the Imperial Guptas. Some coins of the Gupta kings supply us with interesting facts, for example, the Chandragupta-Kumaradevi coins of Chandragupta I have on the obverse the portraits of the king and his Queen Kumaradevi and on the reverse the legend Lichchavayah. From this, Dr. Altekar has rightly deduced that Kumaradevi

was a queen in her own right and the Lichchavis to whose stock she belonged were anxious to retain their individuality in the new imperial state of the Gupta King. Some coins enable us to know the personal tastes and accomplishments of the kings they portray. The artistic excellence of the coins shows the high level of civilization reached in the reign-periods of particular kings. Again the debased metal of the coins is a sure proof of the economic instability of the kings who issued them. The provenance of the coins enables us to know the extent of a king's dominions, although this proof requires further corroboration from other sources. From the localities in which the coins of Yaudheyas and Malavas have been found, it has been possible to know the territories where these republicans were ruling. Coin-legends also help us to know the religious faith of the ruler in question. From the number of deities that occur in the coins of Kanishka I, it has been possible to know his electicism in matters of religion. Sometimes the coins help us in solving intricate problems of art. For the sake of illustration, it may be pointed out that the presence of the portrait of the Buddha on some of the Kushana coins proves beyond all doubt that anthropomorphic image of the Buddha was in vogue in this period.

Apart from the evidence of inscriptions and coins, a scientific examination of monuments, buildings, temples, statues, terracottas, potsherds etc., may throw sufficient light on the religious and socio-conomic conditions prevailing in ancient times. They also enable us to trace the different phases in the evolution of ancient Indian art. The archaeological excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro have revolutionised our conception of ancient Indian culture and have laid bare before us a highly complex urban civilisation dating as far back as the third millennium B. C. Hitherto it was a general tendency among scholars to trace the origins of Indian civilization exclusively to the Vedas. But now we find that at least the practices of yoga, tapas, the worship of sun and mother goddess date back to the time of the Indus civilisation. The Brahmi script also probably has some affinities with the as yet undeciphered Indus script and the finely chiselled statuettes recovered in the Indus Valley have definitely changed our conception about the antiquity of Indian art. We get tangible evidence of the destruction of Indus culture in various sites, probably the Aryans were the destroyers of this sophisticated city culture. But unfortunately we

are still unable to trace the Vedic culture through archaeological remains. This lacunae from the time of Indus civilisation down to the historical time has yet to be filled up by systematic excavations. Sometimes it has been possible to solve chronological puzzles through a careful examination of the stratification of sites. Sir John Marshall in his excavations at Taxila proved conclusively the posteriority of Kanishka to the Kadphises group on the basis of stratification. Often archaeological excavations confirm the statements recorded in books. The excavations of Woddell and Spooner have admirably confirmed the statements of Satrabo and Arrian regarding Pataliputra and have brought to light interesting features of Mauryan architecture.

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II

The Republican Communities of the Gangetic Valley in the age of the Buddha

About the middle of the sixth century B. C. Indian history enters what may be described as the 'Age of the Buddha.' The Master was probably born in 563 B. C. and breathed his last eighty years later, in 483 B. C. We have seen above that the most important political development of this period was the rise of the four great monarchies of Kosala, Vasta, Avanti and Magadha. When the Buddha was very near the end of his life, Vidudabha, the ambitious king of Kosala, attacked the Sakyas of Kapilavastu and imposed his effective sovereignty on them. About the same time, Ajatasatru of Magadha, another great imperialist of the time, made an onslaught on the Vajjis or Lichchhavis of Vaisali and destroyed their freedom, in spite of the enthusiastic support they received from some neighbouring states. As opposed to the kingdoms of Kosala and Magadha, the Sakyas and the Vajjis were non-monarchical peoples whose political constitution was marked by the absence of a permanent, hereditary Head of the State. Buddhist and Jaina texts show that there flourished a number of other non-monarchical communities at this period in the different parts of the Gangetic basin. A list of some of these, compiled by Rhys Davids, gives the following names : [1]

1. The Sakiyas (Sakyas) of Kapilavastu
2. The Bhaggas of Sumsumara Hill
3. The Bulis of Allakappa
4. The Kalamas of Kesaputta
5. The Koliyas of Ramagama
6. The Mallas of Kusinara
7. The Mallas of Pava

8. The Moriyas of Pipphalivana

9. The Vajjis of Vaisali

Apart from the non-mention of hereditary kings in connection with the above states and the frequent references to assemblies meeting in their mote-halls (*santhagara*) to decide major issues, the non-monarchical character of their government is apparent from the fact that some of them are expressly described as *gana*, a term undoubtedly signifying a kingless state. A passage in the *Avadana Sataka* tells us that when a few merchants from the Madhyadesa, visiting the Deccan, were asked by the people there about the form of government obtaining in their country, they replied: 'Some places are under kings (*rajadhina*), others are under *ganas* (*ganadhina*).' *Gana* here obviously denotes the ruling authority of a kingless state in contrast with the monarchical form of government. The word is found used in the same constitutional sense in many other ancient texts, including the *Ashtadhyayi* of Panini.[2] Of the *gana*-states mentioned above, the most important, politically, was that of the Vajjis of Vaisali (Besarh, in the Muzaffarpur District of North Bihar). The Vajjis were in fact a powerful confederation of eight constituent clans and seem to have been regarded as the chief supporters of the republican ideal. Some of the *ganas*, such as those of the Sakiyas, Bhaggas and possibly also the Kalamas, acknowledged the nominal sway of one or other of the neighbouring monarchies, though enjoying a full measure of internal autonomy.[3]

About the actual constitution and government of these kingless states, we have only scanty information of a definite nature. The executive Head of the State was an elected dignitary bearing the title *Raja*, but we are in the dark about the exact method of his appointment and the duration of his term of office Other important officers of the State appear to have been the *Uparaja* (vice-president), *Senapati* (commander-in-chief) and *Bhandagarika* (treasurer). Certain references in early Jaina works seem to suggest that among the Lichchhavis and the Mallas, there was an Executive Council or Cabinet of nine members. 'The Koliyan central authorities were served by a special body of peons, or police, distinguished, as by a kind of uniform, from which they took their name, by a special head-dress.

These particular men had a bad reputation for extraction and violence. The Mallas had similar officials and it is not improbable that each of the clans had a somewhat similar set of subordinate servants.'[4]

The supreme authority, however, was vested, neither in the *Raja* nor in the Cabinet, but in a Central Assembly which met frequently in the *Santhagara* or the mote-hall in the principal towns. The members of the Assembly were also known as *Raja*, a title showing that they were regarded as enjoying the same rank as the executive Head and that the latter was only a 'superior among equals.' All vital matters regarding the *gana*, e.g., war and peace, citizenship, diplomatic relations and assessment of revenues, were thoroughly discussed by the Assembly and its decisions on them were final. The members were evidently conscious of their great responsibility and privilege and gave their verdict on the matter in hand only after due deliberation which may sometime have taken the form of spirited discussion. According to the *Chullakalinga Jataka*, all the *Rajas* of the Lichchhavi state were 'given to argument and disputation' which, as Majumdar says, "seems to prove that the Assembly was not merely a formal part of the constitution ; it had active and vigorous life and wilded real authority in the state." The *Bhaddasala Jataka* refers to a closely guarded tank at Vaisali from which families of the *Rajas* got water for ceremonial sprinkling. It appears that on their appointment to office, 'the members had to undergo a solemn ceremoney of investure of which an important part consisted in a bath in the above mentioned tank specially reserved for the purpose.'

The assemblies of the Sakyas, Vajjis and others have sometimes been described as 'clan gatherings' or 'palavers' in which the young and old alike of the clans participated. There seems little doubt that this is an erroreous view of the matter. The kingless states had definitely advanced beyond the stage of primitive tribal or clannish polity and were already well on the way to developing into territorial states. The meetings of their assemblies were orderly, systematic sessions displaying some of the prominent features of modern Parliamentary procedure and were attended only by regularly appointed members. We have given above some details of the manner in which business was transacted in the assemblies of the Buddhist Sangha[5]. Many scholars are of opinion that this procedure was borrowed almost bodily by the Buddha from the political Sanghas

or republican assemblies of the time for which he had a high respect[6]. Others deny the contention that the republican assemblies served as absolute models for the religious assemblies of the Buddhist Order and hold that some important features of the latter may have been of independent growth[7]. In any case, we may regard it as certain that, in a general way, the republican assemblies functioned in the same manner as the Buddhist assemblies. We may not agree that all the rules and regulations laid down in the Vinaya Pitaka and other texts for the guidance of the latter were observed in the former or that all the technical terms like *jnapti*, *pratijna* and *kammavacha* were prevalent in them also, but the general pattern of deliberation must have been quite similar in the two cases. Accordingly, we may hold that, as in the Buddhist Sanghas, so in the republican assemblies also : [8]

(a) The issue in hand was decided by open voting or ballot in case of a division of opinion. There were definite rules for moving resolutions and voting was resorted to only after the different parties had been given a full opportunity to explain their views to the assembled members.

(b) The more important matters were sent to select committees of the House in which representatives of the different viewpoints were accomodated. If the committees failed to come to any agreement, the matter was referred back to the assembly.

(c) Absentee members were probably allowed to record their vote by proxy. There were rules regarding quorum and hot or objectionable language was not permitted.

(d) The proceedings were duly recorded for future reference by the clerk of the House.

The most important question regarding the government of the kingless states is whether their chief executive officers, the *Raja* and others, and the members of the assemblies were representatives of all the different sections of their population or were drawn only from a small privileged class. In other words, were these non-kingly states democracies or merely oligarchies or aristocracies ? Opinion on the point is sharply divided. Speaking of the city of Vaisali, the capital of the Lichchhavis, the preamble of the *Ekapanna Jataka* tells us that

'in that city there always were 7707 *Rajas* to govern the state.' This is evidently a reference to the central assembly of the Lichchavis and its large membership has impelled some writers to the conclusion that it must have been a popular body, representing the entire population in a democratic way. There are, however, indications in some early texts that this was probably not the case. The Lichchhavis were a *gana*. It has been pointed out that the Majjhima Nikaya, I. 231, identifies *gana* with *sangha* in the special political sense and Katyayana on Panini IV, I, 16, contrasting *sangha* with *ekaraja janapada*, defines it *as a state ruled by a Kshatriya class*. As an example of *gana-sangha*, therefore, the Lichchhavi state had probably an aristocratic constitution, vesting the ruling power in a privileged Kshatriya class, viz., the Lichchhavi clan. This receives support from the fact that though the residents of the Lichchhavi state belonged to various social orders—some of them were Brahmanas, others *gahapatis*, traders, farmers, artisans, servants and serfs[9]—the members of the central assembly are invariably described as *Lichchha-virajas*, i.e., belonging to the Lichchhavi clan. The references to '*Rajakumaras*', besides *Rajas*, among the Lichchhavis in the Buddhist works also suggests the presence of a hereditary aristocratic element in the state of Vaisali. Similar conditions seem to have prevailed in the others states also. Though there must have been many non-Mallas resident in the Malla territory, it is interesting to note that in an early Buddhist text, Ananda, the favourite attendant of the Buddha, is represented as addressing the members of its assembly by the general *gotra*-name of *Vasishtha*.

How were the members of the central assemblies of the Lich-chavis and others selected ? As in the case of the *Raja*, we have no direct information on the point. According to one Jataka, the number of nobles at Vaisali was 'twice eighty four thousand.' If this is correct, it may be held that the total population of the ruling class was approximately 168000 and the assembly 'probably consisted of the heads of big joint families each consisting of about 25 persons.'[10] The *kula* or the family was perhaps the basis of government in the aristocratic republics. There is no evidence of the election of the *Rajas*.

The number 7707 strikes us as somewhat unwieldy for a small state like that of the Lichchhavis and has accordingly been dismissed by some as an imaginary or conventional figure. But, as Dr. A. S.

Altekar aptly points out, 'in contemporary Greece, the Athenian assembly consisted of 42000 citizens each one of whom had a right to attend its meetings. In actual practice, however, not all the members cared to attend. The normal attendance was 2000 to 3000, i. e., hardly 7 % or 8 % of the total membership'. At Vaisali also, though all the *Rajas* were entitled to attend, at the ordinary meetings of the assembly probably not more than 10 % of the members attended and the sessions hardly ever became unmanageable.

The *Ekapanna* passage referred to above also furnishes the somewhat curious information that in Vaisali there were 'as many *Uparajas*, *Senapatis* and *Bhandagarikas* as there were *Rajas*'. Relying on this statement, some writers believe that the Lichchhavi state was split up into a number of small administrative units, 'each a miniature state in itself, with a full complement of staff' and that the *Rajas* (heads of the units) were *ex officio* members of the central assembly with met to carry out the business of the *gana* as a whole. The main drawback of this view is that it does not attach sufficient importance to the limited territory of the state in question. In the days of the Buddha its area must have been approximately between three to four thousand square miles.[9] It is unlikey that there flourished within these narrow limits more than seven thousand 'miniature states'; the arrangement would have been too cumbersome to function properly in actual practice. There seems much weight in the suggestion of a recent writer on the subject that the original Jataka passage probably contained a reference to 7707 *Rajas* only and the allusion to a like number of *Uparaj s*, *Senapatis* and *Bhandagarikas* is an interpolation, added at a later date, when the real significance of the term *Raja* was forgotten, and each of the *Rajas* had to be provided with a suitable staff of officers in the likeness of hereditary monarchs."[10]

Though it seems certain that the central assembly was the highest judicial body in the states and decided the cases of public interest in its general or special sessions, we have very little authentic information about the way in which the day-to-day judicial administration was carried on. The commentary of Buddhaghosha gives an interesting account of the judicial set-up of the Lichchhavis and others constituting the Vajji confederacy. The commentator deposes that among the Vajjis an accused could be punished only if

he was pronounced guilty by eight successive tribunals and even then the penalties awarded were not arbitrary but in accordance with the *Paveni-potthaka* or Book of Precedents. The eight courts, each one of which had the power to discharge the accused if it considered him innocent but had to pass him on to the next higher tribunal in the event of its finding being unfavourable to him, were presided over by officers whose designations are given as *Vinichchayamahamatta*, *Voharika*, *Suttadhara*, *Atthakulaka*, *Bhandagarika*, *Senapati*, *Uparaja* and *Raja*. The authenticity of the above account has been doubted on the ground of the late date of Buddhaghosha, and the view has also been advanced that in his admiration for the Vajjis the scholar-annotator has credited them with an imaginary ideal system of justice In any case, we may reasonably inifer from it that the Vajjis enjoyed a high reputation among their contemporaries for the efficiency of their judicial administration and zealously guarded the liberty of the individual against the inroads of executive tyranny.

To the modern mind, the implication of 'republic' is democratic. But we must remember that this expression has not unoften been employed by writers on political theory to denote governments which were not fully popular, the sovereign power in them being vested only in a comparatively small section of the people. Ancient Athens and medieval Venice are instances in point and other examples also can be cited. It is probably only in this limited sense that we shall be justified in describing the non-monarchical states of the Gangetic valley, named above, as 'republics'.

1. Buddhist India, p. 32. The Sakyas occupied a part of the Nepal Tarai. The Vajjis lived in North Bihar and their capital, Vaisali, is now represented by the mounds of ruins at the village of Besarh in the Muzaffarpur District. The eight clans of the Vajji republic probably were: Vajjis, Lichchhavis, Videhas, Jnatrikas, Ugras, Bhogas, Kauravas and Aikshvakas. Kusinara, the chief town of the Mallas, is identified with modern Kasia in the Deoria District of U P. and Pava is taken by some to be modern Padrauna. The Moriyas (Mauryas) probably lived in parts of the Gorakhpur Dtstrict. The Koliyas were neighbours of the Sakyas and the territories of the two clans were separated from each other by the river Rohini. Sumsumara Hill is identified by some with Chunar in the Mirzapur District. Allakappa and Kesaputta cannot be located at present.

2. See Jayaswal, Hindu Polity, pp. 30-41.

3. Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Dr. B. C. Sen and others think that the Sakyas were an independent people. Contra H. C. Raychaudhuri. Scholars like Oldenberg and U. N. Ghoshal opine that the clan had a monarchical form of government. But several passages in the early Buddhist works seem to go against this view.

4. Buddhist India, p. 31

5. Above, p. 169-170

6. Jayaswal, Hindu Polity, pp. 42-51. Also Bhandarkar, C L., I. 1918.

7. R. C. Majumdar in 'Corporate Life'
8. Ibid.

9. Altekar, in State and Governmens in Ancient India.

10 IHQ, 1945.

III

The origin and caste of the Mauryas

The question of the ancestry and caste of Chandragupta, the founder of the Maurya dynasty, is one of the most debated ones in the history of ancient India. From a very early period, widely divergent views seem to have been prevalent on the subject in the country and even today, after years of patient research and discussion, the controversy is not regarded as finally settled by many.

In the main, we can distinguish two conflicting traditions regarding the parentage and social status of the first Maurya on which the views of modern scholars are chiefly based. One of these, which may be conveniently described as the Brahmanical tradition, regards Chandragupta as a base-born person, a son, nephew or close relative, of the Nanda king of Magadha himself, whom he ultimately overthrew. The earliest datable allusion to this connection between him and the Nandas occurs in the drama *Mudrarakshasa* by Visakhadatta who is supposed to have flourished about 600 A.D. by some though others would place him nearer to 900 A.D. An earlier date, about 400 A.D., proposed for it by some authorities is now generally rejected. Its evidence on the point is somewhat difficult to interpret. While it calls Chandragupta a *Nandanvaya*, it also applies the epithet *Mauryaputra* to him and in one place describes him as *svamiputra* in relation to the minister Rakshasa who served under the Nandas. The word *Vrishala* that Chanakya frequently uses for him in the drama, even before others, may mean a Sudra or simply a Kshatriya negligent of the sacred rites.[1] Another expression, *kulahina*, may suggest either a base born person or only a commoner, and, countrary to the general trend of other evidences, the Nanda king is referred to as high born (*abhijana*) in the drama. The medieval Kashmiri versions of the *Brihatkatha*, (the *Brihatkathamanjari* of Kshemendra and the *Kathasaritsagara* of Somadeva), are more specific of on the point and distinctly describe the Maurya hero as a son of the Nanda king[2]. Neither the *Mudrarakshasa* nor these works give any

explanation of Maurya which became the dynastic appellation of Chandragupta and his descendants.[2] The first known attempt in this direction was made by a medieval annotator of the Vishnu Purana who tells us that Chandragupta was "born of Mura, a wife of Nanda himself', and thus evidently takes the word Maurya as a derivative of Mura. The most developed form of the Brahmanical tradition is found in the *upodghata* by Dhundhiraja (17th cen. A.D.) to his commentary on the *Mudrarakshasa.* According to this writer, King Sarvarthasiddhi had two wives, Sunanda and Mura, the latter being the daughter of a *vrishala* (obviously a low-caste person here). While the sons of Sunanda became known as Nandas, the son of Mura was called Maurya and *his* son was Chandragupta. In spite of some differences of detail the various versions of the tradition are thus agreed that Chandragupta was connected by birth with the Nanda kings of Magadha and that the dynastic name Maurya is a derivative of Mura, the name of his mother or grand-mother.

There are a number of considerations which give rise to grave doubts about the reliability of this tradition as a source of history. In the first place, we should note that no such connection between Chandragupta and the Nanda dynasty is known to the Puranas, the earliest Brahmanical works to deal with the Mauryas. Referring to the succession of the Mauryas after the Nanda kings, the Puranas simply say : "then it (the earth) will pass on to the Mauryas", "the Mauryas will enjoy it (the earth) in Kaliyuga", or "Kautilya will establish Chandragupta as king". The absolute silence of the Puranas raises a strong presumption that the connection is an imaginary one, foisted on the founder of the Maurya dynasty by later writers. Secondly, the testimony of the Graeco-Roman writers also a against the supposed relationship. A scion of the Nanda dynasty would hardly be a man of 'humble origin' to Justin. According to Plutarch, Androcottus (i.e., Chandragupta) used to declare in later days that Alexander could have easily made himself master of India because the king of the Parsii and the Gangaridae (i.e., the reigning Nanda emperor), was hated by the people on account of the 'meanness of his extraction and the wickedness of his disposition.' This allusion to the low ancestry of the Nanda king by Chandragupta, if it be based on fact, will clearly suggests that he was not related to the former in any way and belonged to a family which was free from the particular taint of mean origin. Further-

more, it is impossible to believe that a staunch advocate of the *Varna-vyanastha* like Kautilya would back the claim of Chandragupta to the throne if he were really a base-bcrn person, as asserted by the Brahmanical tradition. In the eyes of the great Brahmana theorist and statesman much of the significance of the revolution ousting the Nanda king would be lost if he was succeeded by a scion of his own family or even by a Sudra. In his *Arthasastra*, we find him giving unequivocal expression to his preference for a high-born prince over a low-born one. "The people themselves bow down to a high-born king" says he, "even though he be a weak one. But they go against a strong king, if he is not high-born." It is hardly likely that with his orthodox Brahmana inheritance and deep-seated prejudice against kings of low birth, he would support Chandragupta in acquiring sovereignty if the Maurya suffered from the blemish of low extraction. Lastly, the Brahmanical attempt to explain the dynastic name Maurya as a metronymic also stands self-condemned. Apart from the fact of its late origin—(the name Mura does not occur anywhere in connection with the Mauryas before the time of the commentator of the Vishnu Purana),—it also violates the rules of Sanskirt grammar according to which the regular derivative of Mura is Maureya while Maurya can only be derived from the masculine name Mura. Taking all this into consideration, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the connection of Chandragupta with the Nandas is a pure fabrication without a foundation in fact.

After referring to the extermination of all Kshatriyas by Mahapadma Nanda, the Puranas add : 'Henceforth the kings will be of Sudra origin.' Some historians interpret this as an indication in support of the low social status of the Mauryas who are mentioned in the Puranas after Mahapadma and his sons. But, as pointed out by Dr. Raychaudhuri, 'this cannot he taken to imply that all the post-Mahapadman kings (including the Mauryas) were Sudras as some of them, e.g , the Kanvas, are distinctly styled *dvija*.' Similarly, Justin's allusion to Sandrocottus (Chandragupta) as a person of 'humble origin' can only mean that he belonged to a non-kingly rank by birth and not that he was of low or Sudra origin. Attention has been drawn to the fact that the *Brihatkathamanjari* and the *Kathasaritragara* which represent the founder the Maurya Empire as *Purvanandasuta* (i.e., son of the real Nanda king as distinguished from *Yogananda* or his reanimated corpse) are traditionally said to be based on the

Brihatkatha of Gunadhya, a lost Paisachi work which was composed not later than the 3rd. cen. A.D. in any case. It has, however, been shown by Prof. C. D. Chatterji that the story of Purvananda, Yogananda and Chanakya containing the allusion to the Nanda parentage of Chandragupta in the Kashmiri works, probably did not form part of the original *Brihatkatha* and as such we need not attach any special importance to it.[3]

The Buddhist tradition about the ancestry and caste of the Mauryas is altogether different from its Brahmanical counterpart. According to it, the appellation Moriya (Maurya) of Chandragupta and his descendants is not a metronymic but the name of an old Kshatriya clan to whose stock they belonged. Thus, the Mahavamsa (c. 5th cen.) tells us in clear words that "the illustrious Chandragupta was born in the family of Moriya Khattiyas (Maurya Kshatriyas)." In another Buddhist work, the Divyavadana (c. 3rd cen. A.D.), we find Bindusara and Asoka, son and grandson respecttively of Chandragupta, claiming the status of Kshatriyas. A clue to the location of the Moriya (Maurya) tribe is furnished by the *Mahaparinibbana suttanta* of the Digha Nikaya which represents them as inhabiting the region known as Pipphalivana, probably in the Gorakhpur District. According to the *suttanta*, the Moriyas sent a messenger to the Mallas in whose city the Buddha breathed his last, demanding a share in the Master's ashes, saying : 'The Blessed one belonged to the Kshatriya caste, we too belong to the Kshatriya caste.' A tribe called Morieis is mentioned by the classical writers and it is not improbable that it is identical with the Moriyas of the Buddhist works though we cannot be definite on the point.

Critically examined, the above tradition representing the Mauryas as an offshoot of the ancient Kshatriya clan of the Moriyas reveals itself in a much more favourable light than the Brahmanical sources on the point. While it accords better with Plutarch's report about the derisive remark of Chandragupta regarding the base birth of the Nanda king and with the conduct of Kautilya in assisting the Maurya in gaining the throne, it involves no faulty explanation of the dynastic title. The Kshatriya origin of the Mauryas is borne out by epigraphic testimony also, though of a quite late period. Thus in certain medieval inscriptions we find the scions of a later Maurya family (the Mauryas of Khandesh) referred to as descendants of Mandhatri of the

solar race.[4] As already noted, an inscription from North Mysore alludes to the "wise Chandragupta, the abode of the usages of eminent Kshatriyas." It is interesting to note that in one of his works Kshemendra, probably the author of the Brihatkathamanjari, himself describes the Mauryas as Kshatriyas.

Some of the projected ends of the architraves of the eastern gateway at Sanchi are decorated with figures of peacocks. From a study of the relief-sculptures on these architraves, Marshall (A Guide to Sanchi, p. 62) has arrived at the conclusion that the peacock was perhaps the emblem of the Maurya dynasty. This is very plausible though not certain. If we assume this, then we have here perhaps another piece of evidence corroborating the connection between the Mauryas and the Moriya Khattiyas of Pipphalivana. For, we are told by Buddhaghosha that the Moriyas of Pipphalivana were so called because of the abundance of peacocks in their vicinity. Peacocks are brought into relation with the Moriyas in the *Mahavamsatika* also and an intimate association of the Mauryas (Chandragupta and his ascendants) with peacocks is suggested by the statement of Aelian that tame peacock were kept in the gardens attached to the Maurya palace at Pataliputra. The figure of a peacok is engraved on the lower part of the Lauriya Nandangarh Pillar of Asoka. The fact that, according to REI, two *moras* (peacocks) and one deer continued to be slaughtered in the royal kitchen of Asoka for soup even after the emperor had become a zealous Buddhist may also have some bearing on the subject, though obviously the point must not be pressed far.

Most scholars are now agreed that the Buddhist works preserve the correct tradition regarding the lineage of the Maurya emperors. But it is not possible to accept even the Buddhist tradition on the point in its entirety. Late Buddhist works like the Mahavamsatika regard the Moriyas as a branch of the Sakyas which had separated from the main stock at the time of the invasion of Viduddbha and had founded a new settlement in the neighbourhood of the Himalayas. Such a relation between the Moriyas and the Sakyas is unknown to Buddhaghosha who makes no allusion to it and is obviously the outcome of the eagerness of the Buddhist writers to connect the dynasty of Asoka with the family of the Master himself. The Mahavamsatika also describes Chandragupta as the son of the

chief (*Raja*) of the Moriya town (Moriyanagara). This is in conflict with the earlier testimony of Justin that he was a person of 'humble origin', though it is possible to reconcile the two statements by some stretching.

The Jaina account of the pedigree of Chandragupta, as preserved in the *Parisishtaparvan* of Hemachandra, agrees with the Buddhist works in tracing the dynastic name Maurya to a connection with peacocks. It is stated that Chandragupta was the daughter's son of the chief (*Mayahara*) of a village of king Nanda's peacock-tamers, *mayura-posaga*. The tradition, which cannot be traced in any really early work, probably errs in representing the Maurya Kshatriyas as a set of professional workers, but might well preserve the memory of their political subordination to the Nanda rulers of Magadha.

Whatever we may think about the relative authenticity of the Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jaina sources about the origin of the Mauryas, it seems certain that the latter were natives of the eastern part of India. To Dr. B. M. Barua, 'Chandragupta was a man of the Uttarapatha (North-Western India), if not exactly of Taxila.' But no substantial evidence has been adduced in support of this contention be the learned writer. Dr. H. C. Seth proposes to identify Chandragupta with Sisikottus (Sasigupta) mentioned by the compnions of Alexander and holds that his homeland lay near the triple-peaked Koh-i-Mor in the valleys of the Swat and Kunar rivers. Both Sisicottus and Sandrocottus were, however, well known to the Greek writers and, had the two been the one and the same person, it is incredible that the fact would not he noticed by any of these writers.

1. "Vrisha is 'Lord Dharma." says Manu in one place, "Whoever desists from adhering to Him is called a Vrishala. One should therefore not go against Dharma.' Elsewhere, giving a list of tribes and peoples, he informs us. 'Gradually these Kshatriya peoples sank down to the status of Vrishala because of the disappearance of the sacred rites from among them and non-contact of Brahmanas.' It, however, appears from the early Buddhist works that Vrishala denoted the social standing of Sudra See above, p. 143. It is not a little curious that in the Mudrarakshasa Chanakya frequently uses this expression for Chandragupta even in the presence of others. This has led some to conclude that it might he an Indianised form of the Greek title basileus, king. But, as Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri points out, in Indian literature the word has only a social significance. Did the deviation from orthodoxy as reflected in the marriage of Chandragupta with a Greek princess, his possible conversion to Jainism and the adoption and promation of non-Brahmanical creeds

by his successors ultimately lead to the dynasty being dubbed as Vrishala by the orthodox writers ?

2. According to the Kathasaritsagara, Chandragupta was the son of Purvananda (i.e., the real Nanda as distinguished from Yogananda or the reanimated corpse of the latter). Jayaswal's conjecture that Nandivardhana and Mahanandin mentioned in the Puranas were Purvanandas or earlier Nandas as opposed to the Navanandas or later Nandas indicating Mahapadma and his sons is a far-fetched one.

3. IC, I. p. 1 ff.

4. PHAI[6], p. 266

IV

The Edicts of Asoka

'To the modern student Asoka towers above the other kings of ancient India, if for no other reason than that he is the only one among them whose personality can be reconstructed with any degree of certainty.'[1] The sources which enable us to have a closer glimpse of the life and and character of Asoka than of any other ruler of ancient India are both literary and archaeological.

The literary evidence is provided mainly by the Asoka legend which developed in separate versions in the northern and southern Buddhist circles and is preserved in some of the principal texts of the two schools. The most important southern works throwing light on the life and activities of Asoka are the Ceylonese chronicles, the *Dipavamsa* and the *Mahavamsa*, and the commentaries of Buddhaghosha. The representative text of the northern version is the *Asokavadana* section of the *Divyavadana*.

The information yielded by these literary sources is far from being sober history as we understand it. For centuries the legend grew under strong priestly influence and accretions accumulated until the original core of fact was heavily overlaid. The picture of Asoka and his work that emerges from it is an angular, distorted one. In place of what was, in all probability, a normally sober and conventional ruler, we find the emperor painted as a monster of cruelty and blood-thirstiness during the early years of his reign. Later, after the conversion to Buddhism, he is depicted as a sort of religious maniac—making a gift of the empire to the Sangha and then buying it back again, having tanks excavated to fill them with medicine for the benefit of sick monks and so on--instead of the sane, though enthusiastic, propagator of morality that he was. There is also contradiction to take into account ; the two streams of legend are in conflict at places. Did Asoka have to kill only one brother to gain the throne as asserted by the *Divyavadana* or did all of his brothers, except one, perish in the dreadful civil war as the southern works would have it ?

Was he the viceroy of Ujjayini or Takshasila before seizing power? Was Moggaliputta Tissa or Upagupta his preceptor, supposing the two are not the same person? Was the name of his mother Subhadrangi or Dharma? The discrepant testimony of tradition on these and other points makes confusion worse confounded. The difficulty of disentangling the kernel of fact from the husk of legend in it has led a scholar of the eminence of Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar to ignore it altogether and base his account of Asoka exclusively on archaeological sources.[2] This attitude of utter disbelief is probably not wholly justified. The evidence of the legend, though hard to sift and evaluate, is not altogether without interest to the student of Asoka's history. It has disclosed the emperor's relationship with Chandragupta and Bindusara which the edicts ignore, the story of the fratricidal war after the death of Bindusara preserved by it obviously contains a core of truth, it gives us glimpses of the personal life and family circle of Asoka which are apparently not wholly imaginary and it supplies an account of the great missionary activity of the time which is corroborated in some details by independent evidence. If handled with discretion, it may be made to yield valuable information to fill up the gaps in our knowledge of the great Maurya ruler.

The legend had become fairly wide-spread at an early date and scenes from it are included in the relief-sculptures on the Sanchi gateways, set up within a century of Asoka's death. The Chinese pilgrims Fa-hien, Hiuen Tsang and I-tsing became thoroughly acquainted with it when they visited the country and have alluded to it many times in their writings. It was drawn upon by Taranath and also by Brahmanical writers like Kalhana and the compilers of the Nepalese Vamsavalis.

The archaeological evidence about Asoka is furnished chiefy by his own edicts. These celeberated records, without which the emperor would have remained a a dim, shadowy figure to us, are found engraved on rocks, stone pillars and in the interior of caves all over the country and 'clearly reveal to us the chief stages in the history of his reign and the motives underlying his activities.' They are concerned mostly with the definition and propagation of *Dhamma* and are far from being a complete record of the life and achievements of the king. But they supply us with considerable information about him as a man and a ruler, the extent of his empire, his administrative

innovations and reforms, his relations with the contemporary powers in India and outside, the various steps taken by him for promoting the happiness of man and beast, his adoption of Buddhism and its momentous consequences and many other subjects, besides throwing a flood of light on the social and cultural conditions of his time. Though there have been scholars to whom the edicts appeared to be meant for 'concealing rather than disclosing the greater part of the emperor's personality'[3] or who dubbed some parts of them as 'mere royal rodomontade'[4] their trustworthiness as a source of history is generally conceded. There is a personal touch and a strong note of sincerity in them which is hard to ignore.

The available inscriptions may be classified as follows :—

A. The fourteen Rock Edicts. This set of fourteen edicts has been found engraved on rocks at the following places : [1] Shahbazgarhi in the Perhawar District, [2] Nausehra in the Hazara District, [3] Kalsi in the Dehradun District, [4] Girnar near Junargarh in Kathiawar, [5] Dhauli near Bhuvaneswar in the Puri District of Orissa, [6] Jaugada in Gajam, and [7] Yerragudi in the Kurnool District of Andhra. Besides fragments of the Rock Edicts have also been discovered at Sopara in the Thana District of Bombay and in Laghman in the Kabul Valley.

B The Separate Kalinga Edicts. Rock Edicts XI, XII and XIII are omitted in the Dhauli and Jaugada versions and are replaced by two others known as Separate Kalinga Edicts. These proclaim, beside other things, the general principles on which Asoka wished to carry on the administration of of Kalinga and other provinces and also his intention to send high-placed officers to supervise the work of the judicial magistrates in Kalinga who were not discharging their duties in a satisfactory manner.

C. The minor Rock Edicts. An edict, not included in the main set of Rock Edicts and generally known as Minor Rock Edict I, is incised on rocks at ten different places : Rupanath in the Jubbulpore District of M.P., Bairat in Rajasthan, Gavimath and Palkigundu in Hyderabad, Maski in the Raichur District of Hyderabad, Sasram in the Shahabad District of Bihar, Yerragudi in the Kurnool District and Brahmagiri, Siddhapura and Jatinga Rameshwara in the Chitradrug District of Mysore. The last three versions also contain a supplementary Edict (Minor Rock Edict II).

D. A single edict engraved on a stone tabelt found at Bhabra. It is addressed to the Buddhist Sangha and is generally designated as the Calcutta-Bairat Inscription.

E. The seven Pillar Edicts, inscribed on monolithic pillars found at Topra (about 180 miles from Delhi,) Meerut, Kausambi, Lauriya Araraja, Lauriya Nandangarh and Rampurwa. All the three last named places are in the Champaran District of Bihar. The Topra and Meerut pillars were removed from their original sites to Delhi by Firozshah Tughlaq and the Kausambi pillar was brought to Allahabad, probably by Akbar.

F. The Schism Edict or the Sanchi-Sarnath-Kausambi Pillar Edict. It embodies the order of Asoka to his civil officers (*mahamatra*) to expel the schismatic monks and nuns from the Sangha. It has been found engraved on stone pillars at Sanchi, Sarnath and Kausambi. The Kausambi version occurs on the same pillar which bears the Seven Pillar Edicts.

G. The Miscellaneous Pillar Edicts. The Kausambi-Allahabad Pillar also contains a short inscription recording a gift by Karuvaki, the second queen of Asoka and the mother of Tivara. It is generally referred to as the 'Queen's Edict.' Two other inscriptions occuring on Pillars at Rummnidei and Nigliva (Negali Sagar) in the Nepal Tarai commemorate the visits of Asoka to the birth-place of the Buddha and the *stupa* of Kanakamuni Buddha respectively.

H. The three Cave Inscriptions. All these are found in the interior walls of caves in the Barabar Hill near Gaya. They record the gift of the caves in question to monks of the Ajivika sect.

The language of the inscriptions is Magadhi, with local dialetical variations in some versions. All the inscriptions, except the Rock Edicts and the fragments at Shahbazagarhi, Nausehra and Laghman, are in the Brahmi alphabet. The Shahbazgarhi and Nausehra versions are in Kharoshthi which was more popular in the north-west and the Laghman fragments are in Aramaic. The minor Rock Edict at Yerragudi is written partly in the boustrophedon style i.e., alternatively from left to right and right to left.

Free translations of two of the most important Rock Edicts, REs. XII and XIII, are given below.

RE XII

King Priyadarsin, Beloved of gods, honours all sects, ascetics and householders, with gifts and various kinds of honour. But he does not attach as much importance to gift and honour as to the 'growth of of the essential' in all sects. 'Growth of the essential' may be of many types, but its root is restraint of speech. There should not be praise of one's own sect or speaking ill of another's sect without occasion ; on the contrary, the sects of others should be honoured. If one does this, he shall be serving his own sect as also doing good to the sects of others. The contrary course of action is harmful to his own sect as also to those of others. One may extol his own sect and condemn those of others through regard for his own sect, but by doing so be surely does harm to his own sect. It is desirable that the followers of the various sects should meet together so that they may understand and appreciate each other's Dhamma. This will make the sects learned and their tenets conducive to good. Those who are attached to particular sects must be told that the Beloved of gods does not care so much for gifts and honour as for the 'growth of the essential' in all the sects. For this purpose he has engaged the services of many *Dharmamahamatras*, *Stryadhyakshamahamatras* and *Vrajabhumikas* as also of various other kinds of officers. And the result of it is the growth of one's own sect and the illumination of *Dhanma* !

RE XIII

Eight years after his coronation King Priyadarsin, the Beloved of gods, conquered the country of Kalinga. In the war, one hundred and fifty thousand people were captured, one hundred thousand were killed and many times that number died. Thereafter, now, when Kalinga has been annexed, the Beloved of gods has developed great liking for Dhamma, compliance with Dhamma and the desire to propagate Dhamma. Having conquered the Kalingas, the Beloved of gods feels repentant. He considers the killing, the dying and the carrying away (as captive) of people, inevitable when an unconquered country is being conquered, as extremely painful and regrettable. Even more regrettable is the fact that there dwell Brahmanas, Sramanas, other sects and householders among whom obedience to elders, obedience to father and mother, obedience to teachers, proper behaviour towards friends, acquaintances, relatives, slaves and servants, and steadfast loyalty are well established and these

also are subjected to violence or death or they suffer due to the banishment of their beloved ones. Misfortune befalls the friends, acquaintances and relatives of those who are lucky enough to be themselves well-stationed and with undiminished love, and in this way they, too, suffer. This is the common fate of men in war and the Beloved of gods grieves over it. There is no country, except that of the Yavanas, where we do not have the orders of Brahmanas and Sramanas and everywhere people are attached to one sect or the other. The Beloved of gods would consider the hundredth part, or even the thousandth part, of the number of those who were killed, who died or who were carried away in Kalinga, as a matter of great regret now and if someone does him wrong, he will forgive him if he can be forgiven. Though he has the power to punish them, he requests and exhorts the forest people of his realm not to offend him too much lest they should have to be killed. The Beloved of gods desires for all beings non-injury, self-control, equable conduct and gentleness.

The Beloved of gods considers the conquest of Dhamma as the highest conquest. And this he has achieved in his realm and in the neighbouring countries to a distance of six hundred *yojanas*, in the territory of *Yavanaraja* Antiyoka and the kingdoms of four kings who rule beyond him, namely, Turamaya, Antekina, Maga and Alikasudara, and in the south, among the Cholas and Pandyas as far as Tamraparni. Similarly, in the king's own dominions, among the Yavanas and the Kambojas, the Nabhakas and the Nabhapamktis, the Bhojas and the Petenikas, the Andhas and the Pulindas, everywhere people are following his teachings of Dhamma. Even where his preachers cannot go in person, there too, the people, hearing about his statements about Dhamma, his regulations of Dhamma and his precepts of Dhamma, are adhering to Dhamma and will so adhere in future. The conquest accomplished in this way is a conquest of love; in the conquest of Dhamma, affection is generated between the conqueror and the conquered. That love, however, is not of much importance; the Beloved of gods attaches importance, as of great value, only to that which pertains to the other world. This script of Dhamma has been engraved so that my sons and grandsons, whoever they are, may not regard new conquest as worth achieving and in conquests which can be accomplished through violence only, they may adopt the policy of forgiveness and least chastisement and may regard the conquest of Dhamma as the only real conquest. That

conquest is conducive to happiness in this world and the next. May the love of Dhamma become the love of all kingdoms ! That is good for this world and the next one.

1. Basham, The Wonder That Was India, p- 56
2. See his Asoka, 5th Edition. Other writes like R. K. Mookerji, B. M. Barua, and Vincent Smith have utilised the testimony of the legends in their works.
3. JRAS, 1626, p. 138.
4. Buddhist India, p. 201.

V

The Satavahanas

A. THE EARLY TERRITORIES OF THE ANDHRA SATAVAHANAS

The name Andhra is applied to-day to the Telugu-speaking areas comprising the lower valleys of the Krishna and Godavari rivers. The expression Amdhapatha (Andhrahapatha) was used to denote the region (or a part of it) as early as the 3rd or early 4th century A. D. in an inscription of the time of Siva-Skandavarman Pallava, and Pliny, probably deriving his information from Megasthenes, also seems to locate the powerful people called Andrae (Andhra) in this very part of the country. Accordingly when the history of the Andhra-Satavahanas first began to be studied, scholars had no hesitation in supposing that they commenced their rule from here. V. Smith located the early seat of their power at Sri Kakulam while Dr. Bhandarkar thought of Dhamnakataka in this connection.

Though not challenged effectively for a number of years, this theory of the eastern origin of the Satavahana power was really not supported by any positive evidence and since 1922, when Dr. Sukthankar examined the question afresh, a large section of scholarly opinion has been opposed to it. The fact that it involves the assumption that by the end of the reign of their second king, Krishna or Kanha, i.e , within about thirty years of the foundation of their rule, the Satavahanas had built up a mighty kingdom stretching across the peninsula and including the Western Deccan may not constitute an insuperable objection against it ; instances of such rapid expansion of political authority are not unknown to history. But surely it is reasonable to expect to find the archaeological remains of early Satavahana rule in the region which was its centre ? Such remains occur in Maharashtra and the adjacent areas, but not in the Andhra country. We have an inscription of the time of Kanha at Nasik and one engraved at the order of Nayanika, the queen of the third king, Satakarni I, at Nanaghat in the Poona District. At Nanaghat, again, there were *relievo* figures of some

early members of the Satavahana family including Simuka and Satakarni I and a king Satakarni, possibly Satakarni I himself or a not remote successor of his, is mentioned in an inscription found at Sanchi near Vidisa in Eastern Malwa. The earliest coins of the Satavahanas known so far are those being the legend 'of the illustrions king Sata' and possibly those on which the legend may he read as 'of king Satakarni'. The first of these were evidently intended for circulation in Malwa as they are said to be of the 'Malwa fabric' while the latter are also of the 'West Indian fabric'. Archaeological evidence thus connects the early Satavahanas with Western Deccan and Central India, and not with the Andhra country which has produced no memorials of Satavahana rule contemporaneous with it. It has been pointed out that the Amaravati stupa (in Andhra) has yielded inscriptions assignable on paleographical grounds to the 2nd and 1st century B.C. and 1st century A.D., but they contain no allusion to the Satavahanas. The first Satavahana king whose coins and inscriptions are found in the Andhradesa is Vasishthiputra Sri Pulumavi, the son and successor of Gautamiputra Sri Satakarni, who flourished approximately in the period c. 130-160 A.D. The conclusion is therefore inevitable that in the early part of their rule, the Satavahanas were not connected with Andhra and the centre of their power lay in the west.

Other considerations confirm this inference. The Hathigumpha Inscription of Kharavela of Kalinga, (probably assignable to about the close of the first century B.C.') speaks of Satakarni, obviously an early Satavahana ruler, as ruling in the west. This would be a singularly inappropriate description if the main stronghold of the Satavahanas was at this period in the Andhra country to the immediate south of Kalinga. The early Satavahanas are known to have been in matrimonial alliance with the Maharathis who are mentioned in western cave inscriptions only. The language or dialect of their inscriptions, sometimes called proto-Maharashtri, also points to Maharashtra and the neighbouring tracts The assumption of metronymics by Satavahana princes may be due to their association with the west. We have it on the authority of Plotemy (c. 150 A.D.) that the capital of Siro Polemaios (Vasishthiputra Sri Pulamavi) was Baithan, i.e, Paithan or Pratishthana on the Godavari and Jaina tradition also speaks of Pratishthana as the 'city of Salivahana', i.e., of Satavahana. The town was probably the seat of the Satavahanas from a very early

period, if not actually from the time of Simuka himself.

The long list of the possessions of Gautamiputra Sri Satakarni (c. 106-130 A.D) in the Nasik Prasasti contains no clear reference to the Andhra country. On the other hand, we have seen that his son and successor, Vasishthiputra Sri Pulumavi, is represented in the coins and inscriptions of that region It may, therefore, he regarded as almost certain that it was only in the third or forth decade of the 2nd century A.D. that Satavahana sovereignty was extended over Andhra which had so far probably been under local rulers. In the Nanaghat Inscription of his wife Nayanika, Satakarni I is given the epithet Lord of Dakshinapatha, but the expression is here used obviously in its narrow sense to denote sovereignty over Maharashtra and the contiguous areas, not over the whole of trans-Vindhyan India including Andhra.

In the Myakadoni Inscription of the time of Pulumavi, the *janapada* of Bellary in Hyderabad is referred to as *Satavahani-hara*, 'the district of the Satavahanas' and a similar name, *Satahani-rattha*, is used for it in the Hira Hadagalli Plates of the Pallava Skandavarman also. Bellary was obviously connected with the Satavahanas in some 'intimate way' but it is difficult to accept the contention of Dr. Sukthankar that it was their original home. Like Andhra, Bellary has also not yielded any coins or inscriptions of the early Satavahanas; the only inscription recorded from there so far probably belongs to the time of the pen-ultimate king of the dynasty. The district probably acquired the name *Satavahani-hara* or *Satahanirattha* because after their expulsion from Maharashtra by the Kshaharatas, the Satavahanas subbsisted mainly in it and the neighbouring regions for a time. In recent years a large hoard of Satavahana coins has been brought to light from Tarahala in the Akola District of Berar, C.P. But as the hoard does not contain the issues of any king before Gautamiputra Sri Satakarni (c. 106-130 A.D.), it cannot be made the basis of any conclusions regarding the original principality of the Satavahanas, as has been done by a high authority.

The family of Simuka may have belonged originally to Andhra but there seems little doubt that it started its royal career in the west. It first consolidated its power in Maharastra, Malwa and Konkan and turned its attention to Andhradesa only in the 2nd century A.D.

B. THE DATE OF THE RISE OF THE SATAVAHANAS

The contemporaneity of Gautamiputra Satakarni with the Kshaharata Nahapana whose inscriptions are now generally thought to be dated in the Saka Era and the mention of Vasishthiputra Sri Pulumavi (Siro Polemaios) in the work of Ptolemy (c. 150 A.D.) provide a more or less certain basis for the reconstruction of the chronology of the Satavahanas during the latter part of their rule. But for the period before the second century A.D. we stand on much less reliable ground. The date of Simuka, the founder of the dynasty, is itself a subject of keen in controversy. Scholars like Smith, Rapson K. A. N. Sastri and Jayaswal place him shortly after Asoka in the closing years of the 3rd century B.C. while Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri, D. C. Sircar, N. N. Ghosh and others assign him to about two centuries later, i.e., to the latter half of the first century B.C.

The main basis of the former view is the statement found in some Puranas that the total rule of the Andhras (Satavahanas) lasted for more than 400 years (411, 412, 456 or 460 years). It is argued that since the Andhra dynasty is known to have terminated about 225-230 A.D., Simuka must have commenced his reign before the close of the 3rd century B.C (c. 230 B.C.). It may, however, be pointed out that there is no full unaninimity on this point in the Puranic accounts. Dr. Raychaudhuri has drawn attention to the fact that in one of the Puranas (Vayu Purana), there appears a divergent tradition assigning a period of about 300 years only to the Satavahanas.[2] This will indicate a date about the middle of the first century B.C. for the beginning of the reign of Simuka and this is confirmed by the clear Puranic statement that he overpowered the Kanvayana Susarman who probably flourished during the period c. 37-27 B.C.

The paleography of the early Satavahana inscriptions also supports this conclusion. Buhler assigned the Nasik Inscription of the time of Krishna (Kanha), the successor of Simuka, to the age of the last Mauryas or the earliest Sungas 'in the beginning of the second century B.C.' But his estimate of the age of the inscription is not accepted by more recent authorities who point out that the characters of the epigraph as also those of the Nanaghat and Sanchi records, referring to the time of Simuka and his immediate successors, 'are more developed and, therefore, later than those of the Bensagar epigraph of

Heliodrous which cannot be much earlier than the end of the second century B.C.'[1] One authority definitely opines that the Nanaghat Inscription is later than the Besnagar Inscription of Bhagavata, the penultimate king of the Sunga dynasty who probably died about 95 B.C. Buhler himself concluded that the characters of the Nanaghat Inscriptions are about a century older than those of the inscriptions of Gautamiputra Satakarni and Vasishthiputra Palumavi. As these latter kings probably ruled in the early part of the 2nd century A.D., Simuka and his immediate successors can hardly be assigned to a period anterior to the first century B. C. This viewregarding the date of the rise of the Satavahanas is further corroborated by the mention of a Satakarni, probably Satakarni I himself, in the Hathigumpha Inscription of Kharavela which is also now assigned to the close of the first century B. C. by several historians.[3]

If we assume that the Satavahanas began their rule in c. 230 B.C., then we have to postulate a gap of about 250 years between the early kings of the dynasty ending with Satakarni I and his sons and the later princes beginning with Gautamiputra Satakarni (c. 106-130 A.D.) This gap cannot be satisfactorily filled in our present state of knowledge. The aggression of the Kshaharata Sakas can at best account only for the last fifty years or so of it. The Puranas of course place a number of princes during this period, but only a few of them are known from other sources. On the other hand 'this gap disappears almost altogether if we place the rise of Simuka in c. 30 B.C.'

Attention may be drawn here to the fact that, according to Sir John Marshall, the sculptural and architectural styles of the *chaitya* hall at Nasik point to a date about the middle of the first century A. D. for its construction. An epigraph in the hall gives the name of the donor's grandfather as Mahahakusiri. This Mahahakusiri is probably identical with the prince Hakusiri who was a son or grandson of Satakarni I. The latter may, therefore, be placed about the beginning of the first century A.D., and Simuka, about 30 B.C. It is a fact that the inscription gives no royal titles to Mahahakusiri while it records the official designations of a number of other persons mentioned in it. But this need not necessarily mean that he did not belong to the royal family and was a commoner. 'Maha'

is probably an epithet added to the name to denote his eminent status.

The number of Satavahana kings is given as 30 in some versions of the Puranas and as 19 in others. The duration of their rule is said to have been, as we have seen above, either more than 400 years or 300 years only. This discrepancy may be resolved by supposing that the larger figures (30 kings and more than 400 years) probably include all the different branches of the Satavahana dynasty, while the smaller ones relate only to the main branch which ruled from Pratishthana, at least upto the time of Yajna Satakarni, and came to an end about 230 A.D. or somewhat later. Basing his conclusion on the assumption that the dynasty came to an end in c. 210 A. D., Dr. A. S. Altekar argues that the Puranic tradition of the Andhra rule extending over 300 years does not support the date c. 30 B. C. for Simuka for, in that case, the total duration of Satavahana rule would be only 240 or 250 years.[4] But the date c. 210 A.D. for the termination of Satavahana rule is by no means certain. Dr. D. C. Sircar places the end of the Satavahana family (main branch) in c. 230 A.D., and, for all we know, the dynasty may have remained in power for a few years more. Moreover, we need not take the round figure of 300 years too literally. It has been pointed out by Sir R. G. Bhandarkar that the reigns of the kings mentioned in certain *Vayu* manuscripts amount only to 272 years and a half.

Dr. Altekar's contention that the Puranic statement that Simuka, the founder of the Andhra dynasty, overthrew the last Kanva king is 'inherently difficult to believe' cannot be regarded as a weighty one. His assumptions that the Kanvas were a powerful imperial dynasty at the time and that they ruled at far off Pataliputra are, both of them, probably not well founded. We have seen above that in c. 30 B.C., the Kanvas were, in all probability, only nominal sovereigns of some regions of Northern India and their capital was probably Vidisa in Eastern Malwa. There is no inherent improbability in supposing that Simuka, possibly a high-placed military dignitary or provincial governor under them, turned against them and shattered their power, as Vasudeva had shattered the power of the Sungas.

C. THE NAME

The fact that while the Puranas call Simuka and his descen-

dants by only one name, Andhra or Andhrabhritya, that name occurs nowhere in the entire range of epigraphic records which give only the appellation Satavahana or Satakarni, has led some scholars to conclude that the Puranic designation might be a mistaken one. Dr. Sukthankar proposes to take the expression Andhrabhritya as a Tatpurusha compound, signifying 'servants of the Andhras', but this contention loses its force when we remember that Simuka is expressly called an 'Andhrajatiya', i.e., belonging to the race or tribe of the Andhras.'[5] Dr. H. C. Raychaudhury, on the other hand, is inclined to think that the name Andhra probably came to be applied to the non-Andhra Satavahanas 'when they lost their northern and western possessions and became a purely Andhra power'. It may, however, be remembered that the Satavahanas, still masters of the western Deccan in the time of Yajna Satakarni, apparently became a purely 'eastern' power only a few decades before their fall and it seems unlikely that this could give rise to such a confusion of nomenclature. The Puranic testimony on the point can be easily reconciled with that of the epigraphs on the supposition that while the inscriptions give the name of the particular family to which Simuka and his descendants belonged, the Puranas give the name of the tribe or race to which that family was affiliated. It is true that the Satavahanas celebrated many Vedic sacrifices and claimed to be Brahmanas, but this may be due to the fact that by the first century B.C. a section of the non-Aryan Andhras had imbibed the Aryan culture to a large extent and there had been a considerable admixture of Brahmana blood in the Satavahana family. Traces of their non-Aryan origin are to be found in the names of the Satavahana kings down to a considerably late period. Such names as Simuka, Hala and Pulumavi can hardly be derived from any Sanskrit originals, and even the dynastic appellation Satavahana itself seems to be of non-Sanskrit origin. 'Satavahana' and 'Satakarni' are taken by some to be Sanskritised forms of Austro-Asiatic terms signifying 'son of horse'.[6]

1. AIU, p. 195
2. PHAI [5], pp. 406-7
3. AIU, pp. 215-6
4. PIHC, 1952.
5. 'Andhrabhritya' is apparently to be taken as a Karmadharaya compound,

meaning 'Andhras who were servants' i.e. who were at first in the service of some other dynasty, proba bly the Kanvas. The Matsya Purana actually describes Simuka as a bhritya who overpowered the Kanvayana Susarman.

6. Pargiter thinks that a compilation of the Puranas was begun in the time of Yajna Satakarni. This is probably not correct, but it seems certain that a redaction was prepared in the first half of the fourth century A.D., i.e., less than a century after the fall of the Satavahanas, and, as such, their testimony about the name cannot not be easily brushed aside.

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VI

Kharavela of Kalinga

The country of Kalinga comprising the Puri and Ganjam districts and some other neighbouring regions on the eastern sea-board of India was conquered or reconquered by Asoka eight years after his coronation and converted into a crown-province of the Magadhan Empire. Its history after the death of the great monarch is very obscure. Along with the other southern territorries it probably broke away from the empire at an early date and became an independent political unit. In the first century B.C. it emerged into the limelight under the vigorous leadership of its king Kharavela or Kharavelasri belonging to the Mahameghavahana family of the Chedi clan. The Chedis were an ancient people who had founded a settlement near the Jamuna in the Madhyadesa long before the rise of Buddhism, possibly even as early as the Rigvedic period. The Mahameghavahana dynasty was probably an offshoot or branch of this old tribe which carved out a principality for itself in distant Kalinga.

The early history of the Chedis of Kalinga is shrouded in mystery. The first two ruling members of the dynasty were obviously petty provincial chiefs ; their very names are unknown to us. But the third king, Kharavela, was a great ruler who effected a considerable expansion of the power and prestige of Kalinga and made it one of the foremost states of the time. We are fortunate in possessing in the Hathigumpha Inscription an unusually full record of the exploits and achievements of this celebrated monarch. Though the epigraph suffers from extensive lacunae and the exact import of many words and expressions occcurring in it is far from clear, its rare fulness of details enables us to form a good idea of the life and career of Kharavela upto the thirteenth year of his reign when the inscription was engraved.

The date of Kharavela has been one of the most controversial questions of ancient Indian history. According to one group of well-known writers, including Rapson, Jayaswal, Smith and

Konow, he flourished in the early part of the second century B.C., but 'there is reason to believe that he lived at a considerably later date.'[1] The main basis of the view of those who plau him in the second century is the assumption that the Satavahana king Satakarni, probably Satakarni I, mentioned as a contemporary of the Kalinga monarch in the inscription reigned during the early years of that century and that the epigraph refers in the 165th year *(panamtariya sathi-vasa-sata)* of the era of Maurya kings (*Raja-Mauriya-Kala*) which must have begun about 320 B. C. It is also pointed out that a Yavana king (*yonaraja*), probably named Dimeta or Dimita, is mentioned as being frightened by the success of Kharavela and that he may be identified with Demetrius, son of Euthydemus, who is generally taken to have ruled about 190—165 B. C. None of these suggestions can be considered as definitely established. As regards the first of them, we have already seen that Satakarni should preferably be assigned to the close of the first century B.C. rather than to the beginning of the preceding century.[2] The readings '*panamtariya-sathi-vasa-ata*' and '*Raja-Mauriya-Kala vochi-ne*' are extremely doubtful and competent epigraphists have proposed to read '*panatariya-sata-sahasehi*' and '*mukhiya-kala-vochhinam*' respectively in their place.[2a] Indeed it is hardly likely that there should be a reference to a Maurya reckoning here for it is evident from the use of regnal years by Asoka in his edicts that no such era was instituted by the Maurya kings to mark the foundation of their empire in c. 320 B. C. Lastly, the identification of the Yavanaraja who was a contemporary of Kharavela with Demetrius I is also far from certain. It has been pointed out that the *aksharas* which have been read as Dimita (or Dimeta) are by no means clear and that even if the reading Dimita be correct, the allusion may be to king Diyumeta or Diomedes, a later Indo-Greek prince, and not to Demetrius I.[3] Reference may also be made here to the fact that a king called Bahasatimita (Brihaspatimitra or Brihatsvatimitra) is said to have been ruling in Magadha at the time of Kharavela. Dr. Jayaswal identifies him with Pushyamitra (184—148 B. C.) on the ground that Brihaspati or Jupiter is the regent or guardian (*nakshatradhipa*) of the Pushya or Tishya constellation of stars. 'But the identification, to say the least of it, is hopelessly unconvincing.'[4]

A clue to the real date of Kharavela is provided by line 6 of the Hathigumpha Inscription which tells us that in the fifth year of his reign (*Panchame cha dani vase*) the king extended an aqueduct

excavated by Nandaraja three hundred years earlier (*ti-vasa-sa-a-oghatita*) from Tanasuliya Road to the city, i.e., the capital. It is highly probable that the reference here is to a member of the Nanda dynasty of Magadha which ruled in the 4th century B. C The king in question must be either Mahapadma Nanda or one of his successors, presumably the former, and accordingly we may assign Kharavela to the first century B. C. He apparently flourished towards the end of that century to which period we have referred Satakarni, his contemporary in the Satavahana line, on independent grounds. This conclusion is in full keeping with the paleography of the Hathigumpha record. Most epigraphists now agree that the epigraph is certainly later than the Besnagar Garuda Pillar Inscription of Heliodrous (close of the 2nd cen. B. C.) and D. C. Sircar points out that 'the use of angular forms and straight bases of letters like *va*, *ma*, *pa*, *ha ba* and *ya* in it suggest a date not much earlier than the beginning of the first century A. D.'[5] Attention may also be drawn to the fact that the sculptures in the Manchapuri cave excavated during the period of Mahameghavahana (Chedi) rule have been adjudged to be 'considerably posterior to the sculptures at Bharhut' belonging to the Bambika-Sunga period.

As a prince, Kharavela was given a good training befitting his royal status and acquired a considerable knowledge of such matters as coinage (*rupa*), accounting (*ganana*), and administrative and legal procedure (*vyavahara-vidhi*). At the age of fifteen, he was formally appointed to the office of *Yuvaraja* or heir-apparent and in that capacity took an active part in the administration for nine years. It was in his twenty-fifth year that he ascended the throne, evidently on the death of his father, and assumed the title of *Maharaja*, Great King.

The most outstanding feature of his career as king was a series of successful campaigns and raids carried out by him in the different parts of the country. The earliest of these was undertaken in the second year after the coronation. In that year the Kalinga monarch sent a large army to the west to besiege (or threaten) the city of the Rishikas (*Asika-nagara*) on the river Krishna-venva (*Kanhabena*). It is said that this was done by him 'without even thinking' (*achita-yita—achintayitva*) of Satakarni. This last-named prince who is said to have ruled to the west of Kalinga is generally identified with the

first Satavahana king of that name. Though the exact significance of the expression *achitayita* is not clear, it seems to suggest that the Rishikas of the Krishna region were under the influence, though not under the actual sovereignty, of the Satavahana ruler and in attacking their territory Kharavela threw an indirect challenge to the lord of Pratishthana. There is, however, no evidence of a direct clash between the two powerful contemporary potentates. In the fourth year of his reign, Kharavela led an expedition against the Rashtrikas and the Bhojakas, probably of the Berar region, and compelled them to 'bow down to his feet.'

After these initial successes in the west, he planned a great invasion of the north and in the eighth year proceeded against Magadha. His forces stormed Gorathagiri 'a hill fortress in the Barabar Hill, and 'harassed' (*upapidayati*) Rajagirha, the ancient capital of Magadha. At this stage there occurs the reference to a Yavana king, whose name has been deciphered by some as Dimita or Dimeta, going off to Mathura but the gaps and the uncertain readings in the epigraph make it difficult to decide how this was connected with the activity of Kharavela. In the tenth year, the conqueror is probably said to have set out for Bharatavarsha (*Bharadhavasa*) and this is taken by some as an allusion to a campaign against the states of Upper India. This may or may not be correct, but in the twelfth year the Kalinga-hero was certainly in the north once again on his warlike mission. It is claimed by his official scribe that, on this occasion, he threatened the rulers of Uttarapatha. Uttarapatha often denotes North-Western India, but it is difficult to say if Kharavela actually advanced into that region or simply menaced it. The greatest suffers from the northern campaigns were Magadha and Anga. 'Causing great fear to the people of Magadha, he watered his elephants and horses in the Ganges, caused the Magadhan king Brihaspatimitra (or Erihatsvatimitra) to bow at his feet, (took back) the (image of) Jina belonging to Kalinga which had been brought by Nandaraja....and carried away the riches of Anga and Magadha.'

The conqueror turned his attention to the south also. In the eleventh year, before starting for the north a second or a third time, he attacked a city known as Pithuda (Pithunda) and had it 'ploughed with a plough drawn by an ass.' The luckless town is generally located near Masulipatam by scholars. The

Kalinga armies probably penetrated far into Southern India and broke a confederacy of Tamil powers (*Trimiradesbasangbatam*) which opposed their progress. The most eminent of the Tamil rulers subdued by them seems to have been the king of Pandya who was made to yield a vast treasure consisting of 'hundreds of thousands of pearls, diamonds and gems.' His discomfiture is assigned to the twelfth year.

Kharavela was thus a great warrior who carried his arms far and wide and humbled a number of his contemporaries in battle. But it appears that most of his campaigns were in the nature of mere raids undertaken for the acquisition of military fame and riches and led to no permanent results. No attempt seems to have been made to consolidate the conquests in the various regions and effectively occupy any areas outside Kalinga and its immediate neighbourhood. The victories of Kharavela brought much glory to Kalinga, but probably no substantial gain. The strain of the far-flung wars was perhaps too great on the slender resources of the small monarchy and may have been responsible, in part at least, for its early downfall. Of Kharavela himself we hear nothing beyond the thirteenth year of his reign, and only one other king of the Mahameghavahana family is known who may have flourished after him.[6]

The Hathigumpha Inscription throws interesting light on him as a man and a ruler also. Besides being a dauntless fighter, he was an admirer of the Muses and was himself an accomplished musician. He spent large sums of money on entertaining his people by public festivities (*utsava* and *samaja*) including programmes of dancing and instrumental and vocal music (*nritya-gita-vadita*), and paid due attention to the promotion of works of public utility in his realm. In the very first year of his reign he repaired many gates and ramparts of the capital damaged by a cyclone and also restored the gardens and tanks. A notable achievement of his fifth year was the extension of the great aqueduct excavated by Nandaraja three hundred years earlier from a place called Tanasuliya Road to the city. The king also built a magnificent palace named Mahavijaya-prasada, and had many caves excavated in the Kumari-parvata (Udayagiri in Orissa) for the residence of monks. Himself he was a follower of the Jaina faith, but showed proper respect to all sects (*sava-patanda-pujako*) and 'repaired the temples of all god's (*sava-devayatana-sakara-karako*).

1. AIU, p. 215

2. Above, pp. 36-33

2a. These readings will change the meaning altogether.

3. PHAI6 p. 420, n. 1

4. Select Inscriptions, p. 209, n. 11. Indeed the very mention of Brihspapatimitra (or Brihatsvatimitra) as the king of Magadha seems to rule out the possibility of Kharavela having flourished in the first half or about the middle of the second century B. C. When Magadha was in the hands of Pushyamitra and his immediate successors none of whom bears the name Brihaspatimitra or Brihatsvatimitra in the Puranas.

4a. It has been argued that tivasa-sata may mean 103 and not 300. Such an interpretation will, however, place Kharavela about 220 B.C. or even earlier. His dynasty may be taken to have been founded about 30 to 40 years earlier as he was its third member. This is an conflict with the testimony of the Asokan edicts which clearly show that this time the province was governed by a Maurya Viceroy.

5. Ibid, p. 206, n. 1

6. Inscriptions in the Manchapuri cave refer to Vakradevaasri, taking of Kalinga (Kalingadhipati), who was also a Mahameghavahana and a prince called Vadukha, but the exact relationship of these with Kharavela is not known.

VII

The Principal Satrapal Houses of North India

The Saka conquerors introduced into India the satrapal system of government which they had adopted in the period of their association with Parthia. The word *Satrap*, meaning a provincial governor, is derived from the Old Persian *Kshatrapavan* (Sanskrit *Kshatrapa*). Many satrapal families ruled in the different parts of the Saka Empire of the north-west under Maues and his successors and the system was continued by the Parthians and Kushanas after them.

The earliest known satrapal ruler of North India is the *Kshatrapa* Laika Kusuluka mentioned in the Taxila Copper Plate Inscription of the year 78. It appears from the said inscription that he probably belonged to the *Kshaharata* family and was the governor of the district of Chuksha 'identified with Chacha to the north-west of Taxila' under the emperor Moga or Maues.[1] Later in life he was apparently promoted to the dignity of *Mahakshatrapa* and was succeeded in that office by his son Patika. This latter chief, mentioned simply as a *Mahadanapati* (great gift-lord), without any official titles, in the Taxila Plate, seems to be named as a *Maha-kshatrapa* in the Mathura Lion Capital Inscriptions of about 10 A.D.

An inscription dated in the year 191 (probably of the Old Saka era=c. 60 A.D.) reveals the name of Jihonika who was a *Kshatrapa* of Chuksha. It is not known if Jihonika belonged to the same family as Laika and Patika or represented a new line which replaced the *Kshaharatas* of Chukhsa after Patika or one of his successors, but the latter appears a more probable alternative as the name Jihonika seems to indicate a Persian origin while the *Kshaharatas* were perhaps of Saka lineage. Jihonika is also known from coins issued by him on which his name appears as Zeionises and his father's name is given as Manigula, also pointing to Persian affinities. If the date c. 60 A. D. proposed here for him is correct, then it is not improbable that for a short time he became independent in Taxila after the successors

of Gondophernes. The rule of his house in the Taxila region was apparently overthrown by the Kushanas.[2]

To another important satrapal family of North India belonged Aspavarman and his nephew Sasa. The official designation of these rulers appears to have been *Strategos* in place of the more usual *Kshatrapa*. Aspavarman at first served under the Saka Azes II but later transferred his allegiance to the Parthian Gondophernes while his nephew was an associate of Pacores. His father was Indravarman who probably held the office of *Strategos* before him. Some scholars identify Indravarman with Itravarman, son of Vijaymitra, known from a few coins found in the north-west. It is further proposed to identify Vijayamitra with the homonymous chief mentioned in the Shinkot Steatite Casket Inscriptions. But the identification is not confirmed by any positive evidence.[3]

The strategic city of Mathura on the Jamuna commanding the high road from the Uttarapatha to the Madhyadesa became the seat of a Saka Satrapal house early in the opening years of the first century A.D. or somewhat earlier. A chief named Ranjuvula or Rajula, who *may* have been at first the subordinate ruler of Sialkot under Azes II, established himself in the region at this period and became the progenitor of a ruling dynasty which seems to have lasted upto the advent of the Kushanas. In some inscriptions he is referred to as a *Mahakshatrapa* but the fact that he also issued coins in his name bearing a corrup Greek legend meaning 'King of Kings, the Saviour' probably shows that in the latter part of his reign, when the attention of the Saka emperor was probably entirely engrossed by the growing Parthian menace, he declared his independence. He was followed on the throne by his son Sodasa Sondasa. The latter probably succeeded to power sometime before 15 A. D. as the Amohini Tablet Inscription of the year 72, mentioning him as a *Mahakshatrapa*, is generally thought to be dated in the Vikrama Era (=15 A. D.). A few other satrapal chiefs, including *Kshatrapa* Hagana who issued coins co-jointly with another *Kshatrapa* named Hagamasha, *Mahakshatrapa* Taranadasa or Bharanadasa and *Kshatrapa* Ghataka, seem to have ruled in Mathura and its neighbourhood after Sondasa.[4] Ghataka represented in an inscription as a scion of the *Kshaharata* family. The close connection between the satrapas of Mathura and the *Kshaharatas* of the north-west is also indicated by the Mathura Lion Capital Inscriptions which, as

we have seen, make a reference to the *Mahakshatrapa* Patika of Chukhsa.

Satrapal dynasties flourished in places like Kapisi, Abhisarap-rastha and Purushapura also. A *Mahakahakshatrapa* named Khara-pallana and a *Kshatrapa* called Vanashpara served under the emperor Kanishka.

1. Some, however, read Kshahara in place of Kshaharata and believe that Liaka was the satrap of Kshahara and Chukhsa.
2. Some think that Jihonika of the Taxila record was probably a grandson of Zeionises, son of Manigula.
3. Supra.
4. Hagana and Haganasha are regarded as the earliest Kshatrapas of Mathura by some. But, cf. AIU, p. 135

VIII

Results of the Greek contact

By Dr *Lallanji Gopal* M.A PhD

A characteristic shared by several early western scholars was to trace everything good and remarkable in Indian civilization to a western source. Thus the impact of the Greek culture on India received an undue emphasis. The mist surrounding the origin and early phases of Indian culture afforded a scope for speculating a Greek origin, chronological correlation being not against such a case. The traditions of vigorous Hellenistic influences over other countries of Asia which formed parts of the Seleucid Empire increased the likelihood of similar story in India. The group of staunch pro-Hellenists included Weber, Windisch and Herr Neise.

But these were opposed by scholars who, in their zest, went to the other extreme of refuting all vestiges of Greek contact. This second group described the Greek settlers in India as illiterate military colonists who could ill serve as medii for the finer points of the Greek culture imprinting themselves on the Indian soil. W. W. Tarn takes a different stand. The Greeks, according to him, never aimed at actively and consciously hellenizing India. The Indo-Greek kings made their empire a partnership of the Greeks and the Indians and in many spheres departed from the practice usual with Seleucid kings in similar conditions. Indians in a Greek city naturally must have picked up some rudiments of Greek and Greek customs. But any references to an Indian adopting Greek culture is conspicuously absent.

It is in the field of arts that the influence of Greece is most apparent. The sculptural pieces, called Gandhara Art after the place from where they have been found, indicate unmistakeable traces of Graeco-Roman art in the 'relief composition as a whole, modelling of the facial and physiognomical features, well rounded, and the relation

of depth and surface, treatment of drapery, wavy treatment of the hair, relation, balance and distribution of weight of parts of the human frame, certain motifs and patterns etc.' This school of sculpture has been named Graeco-Buddhist art; here Buddhist subjects have been depicted through the medium of Greek technique. But strangely enough the specimens belong to the Saka Kushana times and not to the Greek rule in India. The origin of the art has been associated with the Bactrian Greeks. But this theory involves a plurality of gaps and conjectures. This school of art can be better explained as due to an influx of Graeco-Roman artists in Saka-Kushana times. In any case the Art is ultimately Greek in origin, as the Roman Art, in its turn, is to be traced back to Greek influence.

The theory of a Greek origin of Indian coins no doubt now stands discredited by early literary references and what are termed the punch-marked coins. It is, however, clear that amongst the different aspects of Indian civilization that were singularly affected by Greek examples the art of coinage has to be given a prominent mention. In regions which came under Greek influence the indigenous system of minting was supplanted by the die system. The first use of inscriptions on the coins was made by the Indo-Greek kings; their bilingual coins continued to be copied by subsequent powers. Some coin types of the Indo-Greek kings were also borrowed. Again, the subsequent popularity of circular coins was chiefly due to the influence of Indo-Bactrian specimens. Eucratides by issuing silver coins of the value of hemi-drachms of the Persian standard set a fashion which paved the ground for standardising the weight system for coins. Likewise the coin-name 'dramma' frequently occurring in the early medieval inscriptions has to be traced to the drachms of the Indo-Greeks.

The *Gargi Samhita* pays the Greeks a high tribute when even branding them as barbarians. It admits that astronomy originated with them for which they must be venerated as gods. Though it is undoubted that astronomical science had an independent origin in India, some scholars claim a Greek origin for the scientific astronomy of the Indians. Of the five astronomical systems mentioned in Indian works, Paulisa and Romaka Siddhantas are generally traced to western sources. But, obviously the very imperfect knowledge

which the Indians could have of the western systems rules out the possibility of any large amount of actual adoption. No doubt some technical terms in Indian astronomy e.g. *kendra*, *harija*, *drekkana*, and *lipta* appear to have been adopted from Greek words. Tarn observes that the idea of reckoning time from a date fixed once for all came to India with the Greeks. The Indian Eras were fashioned after the Seleucid calendar in its Macedonian form : some of the Kharoshthi inscriptions of the Saka and Kushana times employ the Macedonian names of the months. J. Scheftelowitz opines that scientific astrology (foretelling the future by means of the stars) came to India from Babylon.

Tradition suggests that Greek superiority in scientific and technical activities received an appreciative recognition at the hands of the Indians. In a Mahabharata passage the Yavanas are praised as all knowing *Sarvajna*. Kshemendra in his Brihatkatha, Manjari alludes to their cunningness in making and flying aeroplanes. Budhasvamin refers to the use of Greek beds. We find that Kanishka had utilised the services of a Greek architect named Agesilaus.

Though traces of image worship in India go back to an early time, it has to be conceded that it is in the Greek art of Gandhara that we first find the Buddha represented in human form. The general tendency of Indian scholars has been to trace the statues of the Buddha to Mathura but the claim of Gandhara as the origin even of Mathura statues cannot be ruled out as inherently improbable.

Again it is obvious that certain Greek words were adopted in the Sanskrit vocabulary e.g. terms for ink (mela), pen (kalamo), book (pustaka), plaque (phalaka), tablet (pitaka), a horse's bit (khalina), a mine for sapping a fortress wall (surunga) and a camel (kramela).

We can be sure only of this much and no further. Attempts to trace Greek impact in other directions as well are at best of doubtful merit. Here we have to be content with a brief reference to these theories.

Tarn shows that there was at least some Greek literary activity in the Greek occupied areas of India. Certain scholars go to the extent of suggesting that some of the important Greek literary texts

were available in India. This view is based on certain statements of classical authors. Dio Chrysostom says : 'Indians possessed and used a translation of Homer into their own language' Aelian has a story that there was not only an Indian translation of the poems of Homer but a Persian one also. Plutarch observes that through Alexander Asia was civilised and Homer was known there. But these statements connot be taken to be literally correct, because 'nowhere in the Hellenistic world has there been found any translation of any piece of Greek literature except (at the end) Latin'. Probably the reference is to the Mahabharata. Weber had opined that Valmiki borrowed his story from Homer. But the resemblences between the two stories are quite distant and do not imply a borrowing.

Peterson, Reich, Rohde and Weber postulate that the Sanskirit Prose Kavya was derived from Greek romance. But the fact that the first appearance of these Kavyas reveals a full-fledged form does not necessarily imply a foreign origin. It may be explained as originating out of the narrative material of the folk tale and the embellished style of the poetic Kavyas. The parallels of incident, motif and literary device that have been detailed to prove the case can be opposed by the great differences, both in form and spirit, that exist between the romances of the two countries. Moreover, borrowing has to be proved by indubitable references.

The Greek origin of Indian drama, proposed by Weber and supported by Windisch, has been thoroughly criticised by a number of scholars. Now no serious scholar doubts the indigenous origin of Sanskirit drama. Hence of late the emphasis has shifted to suggesting Greek influences on the development of Sanskrit drama. Reich has made a new case in favour of Greek mimics. But certain parallels do not necessarily mean positive influence. In view of the essential difference in the nature and treatment of the two types the presumption of influence has to be supported by positive evidence. The argument based on the device of recognition taken does not mean. The motif has often been used in other forms of Sanskrit literature and can independently evolve in any primitive society. The Vita, the Vidushaka and the Sakara differ much from their Greek counterparts and appear to have been Indian in origin. The Yavaniki (curtain) is said to have been of Greek origin or made of Greek cloth but the argument is hollowed by the fact that the curtain is conspi-

cuous by its absence even in the Greek theatre.

Weber and Benfey had opined that Indian fables were borrowed from Greece But according to some others the process actually was just its reverse. The general tendency of modern folklorists is against tracing tale and fable literatures as such to one single country. Each individual story needs to be studied by itself. No doubt in certain cases chronological priority seems to be in favour of Greek derivation, but different have been the tests of judgement to decide the claim of originality and hence there appear a number of possibilities out of which it would be wrong to emphasise one alone.

Jacobi had claimed that the Doha metre of Apabhramsa grew out of the Greek hexameter. But he was opposed by Keith who instead suggested an Indian origin.

Likewise, the attempt to derive the Ajanta paintings ultimately from Greece has no sound logic. The argument that Greek paintings in the Gandhara region have been destroyed cannot be given much weight.

The several striking resemblences between the medical systems of India and Greece have been construed by some scholars to imply a Greek influence, especially in the field of anatomy. Indian tradition also attests to the skill of the Greek physicians of Bactra and Taxila who could restore sight to a blind. But in the absence of clear evidence we cannot decide the extent of influence and of parallel growth.

Plutarch says that some Indians worshipped Greek Gods. But the statement probably refers only to the Indians in Greek cities participating in the official city worship. The coins of the foreign dynasties depicting some of the western deities indicate that Indians had some awareness of the western religions. But we cannot go any further. The theories suggesting the gospel narratives as the origin of some of the legends connected with Krishna and Buddha and tracing Siva and Phallic worship to Greece find no serious supporter. Likewise the view that the Indian system of logic and the concept of atoms in the Jaina and the Vaiseshika schools have a Greek derivation has no congent case. The representations of the head of a philosopher on the two sides of a Greek ivory pendant does not establish any thing substantive.

IX

The Date of Kanishka

Though the reign of Kanishka constitutes an important epoch in the history of India there is no unanimity of opinion among scholars about the period when the great Yueh-chi emperor flourished. While most writers are agreed that he ruled for 23 years, the various dates assigned to his accession range form B.C. 58 to A. D. 278. The controversy now seems to have narrowed down a little but is still far from finally closed.

A discussion of the date of Kanishka involves the consideration of the chronology of the Kushana kings from the beginning When did the long reign of Kujula Kadphises, who died an octogenarian, come to an end ? What was the duration of the reign of Kadphises II who followed him on the throne ? Was Kanishka the immediate successor of Kadphises II or was there a 'gap of time' between the two monarchs ? These are questions vital to the problem and must be thoroughly examined in order to arrive at a conclusion.

It maybe regarded as almost certain that the conquest of the Kabul Valley. or a part of it, by Kujula Kadphises was effected only after 45 A.D., the last recorded date of the Indo-Parthian king Gondophernes, who is known to have been in possession of the territory in question. Sir John Marshall thinks that he could hardly have been more than 50 years of age when he scored his great victory over the Indo-Parthians (i.e. the successors of Gondophernes) and so may be taken to have ruled upto at least c. 85 A.D. But numerous instances may be quoted from history of warriors and conquerors fighting the most crucial engagements of their lives in advanced old age and the possibility is always there that the successful campaign which ousted the Parthians from the Kabul Valley may not have been led by Kujula in person but by his son Wema on his behalf. Indeed, there seems good reason to believe that the occupation of the Kabul Valley was one of the last achievements of Kujula and that he did not survive it by many years. According to the *Hou han shu*, he restored the unity of Yueh-chi rule by subduing the four other *hi-houi* and

called himself 'king' (*Wang*) 'more than a hundred years' after the division of Bactria into the five principalities. It is not definitely known what period of time elapsed between the arrival of the Yueh-chi in Bactria (c. 130 B. C.)[1] and the division of the country into the hi-hous, but it is not likely to have been a long one, and accordingly we may hold that Kujula accomplished the unification of the Yueh-chi rule not later than about the beginning of the Christian era[2]. This view finds corroboration from the fact that, according to Chinese sources, there actually was a *Wang* (king) of the Yueh-chi in 2 B.C. who sent some Buddhist scriptures to China. The Chinese works do not give us the name of this Yueh-chi king but his marked interest in Buddhism suggests that he was probably no other than Kujula himself whose title *Sacha-dhrama-thita* on coins seems to reflect Buddhist leanings. As the Kushana chief must have been a grown up person, at least 20 to 25 years of age, when he defeated the rival *hi-hous* and assumed the title of king the end of his eventful career can hardly be placed after c. 60-65 A. D. and may actually have come about a few years earlier in c. 50-55 A.D., shortly after he conquered the Kabul Valley from the Indo-Parthians. If the coins on which the name of Kujula appears on the reverse with that of Hermaeus on the obverse are taken to be a joint currency of the two chiefs, then the point is further strengthened as it does not seem possible to bring Hermaeus lower than the concluding years of the first century B C. in any case. But, as we have seen, this point cannot he pressed far as the contemporaneity of Kujula with Hermaeus is highly doubtful. Konow and Marshall argue that as the achievements of the Kushana king are mentioned in the *Hou han shu*, he should be taken to have begun his career only after 25 A.D. But we need not attach much importance to the statement of Fan-ye (the author of the *Hou han shu*) that his work covers only the events of the period 25-125 A.D. and afterwards for, "Fan-ye contradicts himself immediately when he relates events which took place long before or after this period, viz., the defeat of the Yueh-chi by the Hiung-nu, the trek to Ta-hsia, the conquest of it etc. etc. On the other hand, he relates facts from 159 and 161 A.D., as Thomas points out". Konow and Marshall also identify Kujula with the unnamed Kushana king mentioned in the Panjtar and the Taxila Silver Scroll inscriptions, dated in the year 122 and 136 respectively (generally taken by scholars to correspond to 65 and 79 A.D.) But the identification is far from

certain. The non-mention of the personal name of the Kushana monarch in these records does not necessarily indicate the earliest king of the dynasty, and, as pointed out by Dr. Raychaudhri, the title Devaputra, occurring in the latter of them, was characteristic rather of the Kanishka group of kings than of Kadphises I or Kadphises II.[3]

Kujula Kadphises, then, ceased to reign not after 60-65 A.D., probably even earlier about 50-55 A.D., and was succeeded by his son Wema. The duration of the reign of Wima is not certain, but as he came after an octogenarian, his rule could hardly have been a protracted one and may reasonably be supposed to have lasted for not more than 15 to 20 years. The end of his career, therefore, may be placed about the fourth decade of the first century A.D. (60-80 A.D.) He is, in all probability, the king whose authority is invoked in the Panjtar Inscription (65 A.D.)

Reasons have already been adduced to show that Kanishka was probably the immediate successor of Wema. It is indeed significant that in the finds of the Kushana coins and inscriptions in India there is represented no king who may be placed definitely between these two rulers. It is argued by some that the nameless author of the so-called 'Soter Megas' coins may have ruled after Wema and before Kanishka. But it has been demonstrated conclusively by Bachhofer that these coins were minted during the reign of Wema. Bachhofer identifies the 'nameless king' with Wema and in view of the identical titles assumed by the two, this seems very probable. Even if the identification is not accepted, we need not suppose that 'Soter Megas' was the successor of Wema, for it is quite possible, as maintained by Kennedy, that he was the semi-independent governor administering the Indian provinces on behalf of Wema. Another person who is sometimes placed between Wema and Kanishka is Jihonika. This chief is known to us not only form a Taxila Silver Vase Inscription, dated 191, but also from coins on which his name is given as Zeionises, son of the Satrap Manigala. The date of Jihonika is, however, very uncertain, the identity of the era to which the year 191 is to be referred not being clearly ascertainable. The fact that the vase in question was found in the ruins of Sirkap probably shows that he flourished in the period before the coming of the Kushanas, rather than between Wema and Kanishka. It is not improbable that he became independent in Taxila

for sometime after Gondophernes and his immediate successors and was himself overthrown by Wema when the latter conquered the city.

The beginning of the reign of Kanishka may thus be looked for in the period c. 60-80 A.D. It is a well-known fact that the dates given in his inscriptions and in those of his successors constitute an ascending series (Kanishka 2-23, Vasishka 24-28, Houvishka 28-59, Vasudeva 67-98). In other words, a regnal dating commencing obviously with his accession was continued by his successors and thus assumed the form of an era. As already indicated, this makes it highly probabled that the era originating with his coronation is no other than the so called Saka Era, the Saka Samvat or *Saka-nripati-kala* of India, of which the initial year (78 A.D.) falls in the same general period and of which the foundation was associated with foreigners from the earliest times in India. The twenty-three years of the reign of Kanishka were, in all probability, from 78 to 101 A.D.

The above reconstruction of the early Kushana chronology leading to the fixation of 78 A.D. as the probable date of Kanishka's coronation commands the largest number of scholarly advocates, including Fergusson, Oldenberg, Rapson, Thomas, Bachhofer, Altekar, R. D. Banerji, Raychaudhuri and many others. It is, however, rejected by some prominent Indologists, including Konow, Marshall, Dubreuil, Girshman and Rowland, who are inclined to place the begining of Kanishka's reign about 125 or 144 A. D. The principal arguments advanced by these scholars in support of their conclusion and refutation of the view set forth above may be summed up as follows :—

(a) As Kanishka is not named in the *Hou han shu* which covers the period upto 125 A. D. he must have come to the throne only after that date. [Now, this is only an argument of silence and cannot be regarded as conclusive. Neither Fan-ye nor Pan-ku (the author of the *Chien han shu*) was writing a history of India or the Kushanas. The references to India and the Kushanas in their works are only incidental and therefore their silence about Kanishka does not imply that he was not crowned before 125 A. D.]

(b) If Kanishka ruled in 78 101 A. D., he must have been the Yueh-chi ruler who suffered reverse at the hands of Pan-chao. The great fame of Kanishka as a warrior and conqueror makes it difficult to believe this. [It may, however, be remembered *that in Indian tradition also*, the inability of *one* Kanishka to conquer Chinese Turkistan

from the Chinese is clearly hinted at. Hiuen Tsang, of course, refers to Kanishka's sovereignty to the east of the Pamirs, and it may be argued that, in view of the victorious career of Pan-chao, this is incompatible with the theory assigning the Yueh-chi king to the period 78-101 A.D. But, as pointed out above, it is not improbable that the tradition from which the Chinese pilgrim got the information has confused the achievements of more than one king of the Kushana family. Alternatively, the suggestion of Thomas that the mere fact of some fugitive princes of Chinese Turkistan having sought refuge with Kanishka due to the imperialist activity of Panchao in their own country may have given rise to the legend of the Yueh-chi emperor's rule there is also worth considering.]

(c) Kanishka was a Kushana and so it is difficult to explain how the era founded by him was called *Saka Samvat*. [But it is a matter of general agreement that 'the nomenclatures of Indian eras are no proof of their origin.' The era of 78 A. D., though established by Kanishka, may have acquired the name *Saka* because of its continued use by the Saka satraps of Western India who employed it in their inscriptions and coins upto the last. Moreover, as the Sakas and the Kushanas entered India from the same region, the distinction between the two may not have been very well understood in ancient India.]

(d) The Tibetan sources indicate a date in the second century A. D. (c. 120 A. D.) for Kanishka. [This Kanishka, as Dr. Raychaudhuri says, was probably a second prince of the same name whose date 41 (=119-20 A. D.), known from his Ara Stone Inscription, accords well with the Tibetan accounts].

(e) According to Chinese sources, King Po-tiao (which is only the Chinese variant of the Indian name Vasudeva) sent a delegation to China in 230 A. D. The known dates of Vasudeva, a descendant of Kanishka I, range from 67 to 98 of the Kanishka era. The accession of Kanishka, therefore, must be placed only about a century before 230 A. D., i.e. about 130 A. D. [The identification, however, of king Po-tiao with Vasudeva I who reigned from 67 to 98 is by no means certain. Numismatic evidence reveals the existence of one Kushana king, if not more, bearing this name who apparently flourished at a somewhat later date. It is quite possible that the allusion in the Chinese works is to this second Vasudeva and not to his earlier name-

sake. If so, there will be no need to shift the date of Kanishka from the first to the second century A. D.]

(f) We learn from the Wei-lio, a history of the Wei dynasty covering the period upto 239 A. D, that Kipin (Kafiristan), Ta-hia (Bactria), Kao-fu (Kabul) and Tien tchou (India) were still subject to the Yueh-chi. This information may relate to the period a few years earlier than 239 A. D., but it is certain that during the early years of the 3rd cen. A. D. the Kushanas were supreme in the above named regions. As no successor of Vasudeva I is known to have ruled over these extensive territories, the end of his reign cannot be placed earlier than the beginning of the 3rd century A. D. and consequently the accession of Kanishka cannot be dated as early as 78 A.D. [This argument loses its force when we take into consideration the findspots and types of the coins of the successors of Vasudeva I and the vagueness of the Chinese term 'Tien-tchou.' The coins of Kanishka III, probably the immediate successor of Vasudeva I, are 'found in the Punjab, Seistan and Afghanistan which must, therefore, have been included in his kingdom. It also extended over Kashmir and Bactria'. The coins of Vasudeva II whose reign could hardly have ended before the early years of the third century according to our scheme of chronology, are only of the Siva and Bull type which was prevalent in Bactria and Afghanistan but it is probable that at first he also retained hold of parts of the Punjab and Kashmir. The statement in the Wei-lio, therefore, does not necessarily imply that Vasudeva I ceased to reign only after the comment of the 3rd cen. A. D 'Tien-tchou' probably signifies only the Punjab (or parts thereof) in this case.][6]

The arguments in favour of the view that the reign of Kanishka began in 78 A. D., and that he was probably the founder of the Saka Era may not be regarded as conclusive, but they do make out a strong case, which accords best with the present evidence, and is not invalidated by any known facts. Of the other theories in the field, the one propounded by Fleet, making Kanishka the founder of the Vikrama Era of 58-8 B. C., is clearly wrong as it involves the assumption, rendered completely untenable by the archaeological excavations at Taxila, that Kanishka preceded the Kadphises group of Kushana kings. Similarly unacceptable is the view placing the beginning of Kanishka's reign in 248 A. D. (epoch of the Traikutaka-Kalachuri Era) or still later in 278 A.D. 'The catalogues of the Chinese

Tripitakas state that An-Shih-Kao (148-170 A. D.) translated the Margabhumi Sutra of Sangharaksha who was the chaplain of Kanishka. This shows conclusively that Kanishka flourished before 170 A.D.' Besides, this chronology would lead to the conclusion that in c. 350, Vasudeva I was ruling the territory upto at least Mathura in the east whereas the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of about the same time names a number of tribal states, such as those of the Yaudheyas, Madras, etc. ruling in central and eastern Punjab and Northern Rajputana. Of the vains theories assigning the reign of Kanishka to the period after the first century A.D. the least open to objection are those which date his accession in the first half of the next century, about 120, 125 or 145 A. D. But the plausibility of these is also considerably lessened by the fact that while the dates in the inscriptions of Kanishka and his successors strongly suggest that an era originated with his accession, we know of no era commencing in the second century.

1. The date of the migration of the Yueh-chi from their original homeland and their arrival in Bactria has been calculated by several scholars. There seems little doubt that Kuwabara, Yasuma, Haloun and others are right in placing the trek of the Yueh-chi from their fatherland to the Jaxantes region between c. 172-160 B.C. and the exodus to Bactria between c. 135-129 B. C. It is pointed out by some that at the time of Chang-kien's visit (129-28 B. C.) the Yueh-chi capital was to the north of the Wei (oxus). But we must remember that the envoy describes the Yueh-chi as masters of Bactria.

2. E. Specht, V. Smith and others think that a considerable period of time elapsed between the conquest of Bactria by the Yueh-chi, and its division into the hi-hous. 'However, that interpretation of the context seems far fetched. The Hou han shu goes back to the Ch'ien han shu and if we look up the passage in the Chien han shu not one reason appears for assuming that the Ta-Yueh-Chih waited with dividing the country into five hsi-hou. On the contrary it is only natural to suppose that they did this immediately after they brought the country under their control. The passage was interpreted in the same way by Levi, Hari Charan Ghosh and Jayaswal and later on again by Haloun.' The Scythian Period, p, 28.

3. Dr. Leeuw points out that both Pan-ku and Fan-ye mention one capital of the Yueh-chi realm which probably means that Kujula had subjugated the other four hi-hous already before 25 A. D. The Scythian Period, p. 371. Her contention, however, that Ki-pin was incorporated into the Yueh-chi kingdom before 25 A.D. as it is not mentioned by Pan-ku, while Fan-ye represents it as 'a great kingdoms' cannot be accepted.

Konow identifies 'Kapa mentioned in the Takht-i-Bahi Inscription with Kujula and infers from the epithet 'erjhuna' that he was still a young prince at the time when the inscription was engraved. But the identification is uncertain, and one may reasonably ask what a Kushana prince was doing at the court of the Indo-Parthians.

4. The large number of the coins of Wema probably indicates only a prosperous reign.

5. PHAI6, p. 463.

6. NHIP, pp. 12-18.

X

Dhammavijaya and Dhamma

What exactly does Asoka mean when he tells us, in R.E. XIII, that he considered Dhammavijaya as the only true conquest and that he had achieved it not only in his own empire but also in the kingdoms of his neighbours, including those of Antiochus II Theos of Syria and four other Greek kings who ruled beyond him ?

In Brahmanical works such as the Arthasastra, Mahabharata and Raghuvamsa, Dharmavijaya (Dhammavijaya) is defined as a definite imperial policy worthy of being adopted by those who have the power to implement it. If a conquering monarch is satisfied with the mere offer of submission or acceptance of sovereignty by the rival kings, and does not aim at taking away their territory or wealth, it is Dharmavijaya or Noble Conquest in contrast with Lobhavijaya (conquest for greed) or Asura Vijaya (Demoniac conquest). Its clear aim is to establish the superiority of the conqueror over the other kings and his position as their suzerain though an element of benevolance is introduced into it by recommending considerate treatment to the worsted rivals. It is thus a political conquest, based on military superiority and is often obtained through war, though sometimes mere pressure or a wholesome respect for the conquer's power may induce the lesser princes to submit to him.

Nothing was farther from the thought of Asoka than this Brahmanical conception of Dharmavijaya when he emunicated *his* policy of Dharmavijaya. His Dhammavijaya involved the total repudiation of aggressive war and violence and an unequivocal guarantee of friendly intentions to the neighbouring states. It was a complete antethesis of Sarasakyavijaya, i.e., conquest achieved through aggressive war. The tBrahmanical idea of Dharmavijaya in fact corresponds somewhat to what the emperor advises his descendants to do if they cannot avoid Sarasakyavijaya ; "In conquest attainable through war also, forbearance (*kshanti*) and least possible harassment (*lagbudandata*) should be exercised.'

In conformity with the general tenor of their religion, the Buddhist writers have spiritualised the idea of Dhammavijaya. They define Dhammavijaya as a conquest, achieved not through war or military pressure, but through a mystic force generated by moral eminence and the practice of virtue. In such texts as the Selasutta of the Suttanipata and the Mahapadana Suttanta and Lakkhanasuttanta of the Digha Nikaya we find it stated that if a person is born with the 'thirty-two marks of a great man, there are only two destinies for him. If he renounces the world, he becomes a supreme Buddha. If, on the other hand, he remains in the house', he 'becomes a king, a righteous wheel turning king (*Chakkavatti* Dhammaraja), conqueror of the four quarters. . .and having conquered the earth upto the ends of the ocean, not by army (*danda*) or weapon (*sastra*), but by righteousness (*dhamma*), reigns supreme over it'. According to a legend narrated in the Chakkavatti Sihanadasuttanta of the Digha Nikaya, when a raja becomes a *Chakkavatti* of this type, a divine wheel makes its appearance over his palace and followed by the king and his army, rolls forth to the different quarters of the earth beginning with the east. To whichever region the wheel goes its kings approach the *Chakkavatti* saying : 'come, O great king ! Welcome, O great king ! All is thine, O great king. Instruct us, O great king.' In reply, the *Chakkavatti* says : 'Ye shall slay no living thing ; ye shall not take what is not given ; ye shall not indulge your bodily desires in an unjust way ; ye shall drink no intoxicating drinks......enjoys your possessions as you have been wont to do.'

It will appear that, like the Brahmana writers, the Buddhist theorists also regard Dharmmavijaya as leading to the establishment of the universal sovereignty of the Righteous King. The Buddhist Dhammavijayi becomes as much a political sovereign of the world as his Brahmanical counterpart—only this position he acquires not by war or pressure but by the 'soul force' born of moral superiority. It is contended by some that the Buddhist Dhammavijaya has no political connotation, that the empire it brings into existence is not terrestrial, but only moral or spiritual. A careful analysis of the legend referred to above seems to contradict this supposition. The utterance of the rival kings of the quarter, 'All is thine, O Maharaja', obviously implies the surrender of their kingdoms and possessions to the Vijayi while the latter's gracious 'enjoy your possessions as you have been wanted to do' can only mean that he accepts their homage

but confirms them in the enjoyment of their realms as his nominal vassals. As Prof. K. A. N. Sastri points out, war is not the instrument of this Vijaya, but 'the conquest and empire are real, though the imperialism is mild and benevolent in its nature.' In fact it is clearly stated in the Buddhist texts that the kings of the quarters become 'vassals' of the Vijayi.

If the above view of Dhammavijaya is correct, then it will have to be accepted that the Asokan 'conquest of Dhamma' does not wholly conform to it. It is unthinkable that the emperor claimed such a position of political supremacy when he gave his contemporaries to understand that the kingdoms of Syria, Macedon, Corinth, Egypt and Cyrene were within the orbit of his 'conquest'. It is conceivable that, in a vague way, the rulers of Chola, Pandya, Satiyaputa, Keralaputa and even Ceylon, may have accepted his sovereignty but any such claim in respect of the Hellenistic states referred to above would be rash in the highest degree. It may be noted that the claim is made not only about these external kingdoms but also about Asoka's on territory (*hida*), which was already under his full political control and in relation to which no such assertion was necessary. Dhammavijaya of the edicts has obviously no political implication ; such expressions as 'Mauryan imperialism pacified', 'camouflaged political programme', or 'imperial ambition *modified* in accordance with the humanitarian ethics of Buddhism' used by some writers to explain its significance seem to be entirely mistaken.[1] To Asoka, Dhammavijaya was a missionary movement pure and simple, and the claim means nothing more than that his propaganda in favour of Dhamma had borne some success in the various countries. The king himself makes it clear when he tells us in the same breath : 'Likewise here in the king's dominions among the Yavanas and Kambojas, the Nabhakas and Nabhapamktis, the Bhojas, Petenikas Andhas and Pulindas—everywhere they follow the teaching of the Beloved of the gods in respect of *Dhamma*. Even where the envoys of the Beloved of the gods do not go, they, hearing the utterances of *Dhamma*, the ordinances and the instructions in *Dhamma* by the Beloved of the gods, practise *Dhamma* and will so practise.'

What that *Dhamma* stands for has already been stated. We have seen above that its simple and apparently non-distinctive

character has given rise to a discussion among scholars and various theories have been advanced on the subject which may be briefly noticed here. Dr. J. F. Fleet held that the *Dhamma* of Asoka held that the dhamma of Asoka is no religion in particular but the Rajadharma of the Hindus as set forth in the Manusmriti and Mahabharata. This cannot possibly he right for Rajadharma, we know, is meant for kings and their officers while Asoka is never tired of proclaiming that *his Dhamma* is meant for the people in general to follow in practice. We may also reject the theory of father Heras that the Asokan *Dhamma* is a general *Dhamma* but based primarily on Brahmanism (or Hinduism). How can a *Dhamma* be said to be based 'primarily on Brahmanism', if it does not involve the slightest emphasis on formal ritual and, in fact, openly repudiates it ? The fact that, according to Asoka, the highest reward of those who followed the path of *Dhamma* was *Svarga* does not necessarily indicate a Brahmanical source, nor are the emphasis on religious toleration, the belief in gods and the continuance of life after death any more in the point. The choice now seems to between the opinion of V. Smith, Dr. R.K. Mokerji, R. P. Chanda, R. S. Tripathi etc. who hold that the Asokan *Dhamma* cannot be identified with any religion in particular but is only the moral content of all religins, a sort of universal religion, 'a synthesis of are religions made by a very tolerant person' and that of Senart, Hultzsch, Bhandarkar and most others who identify it with Buddhism, the emperor's personal religion. *Prima facie* the case for the former view appears a strong one. Not once does Asoka make a clear appeal for the adoption of Buddhism by the people ; he does not even name the Buddha or the Sangha in connection with his propaganda. The distinguishing precepts of Buddhism are conspicuous by their absence in the edicts. In place of *Nirvana* we have *svarga* which, if anything, places the *Dhamma* in a light different from that in which it is found in the Tripitaka. It is quite conceivable that a 'very tolerant person', such as Asoka certainly was, and a conscientious sovereign like him, may have thought it improper to use his position, resources and influence as the Head of the state for the promotion of a particular creed. There is, however, much to be said for the other side also. It seems really difficult to believe that in the Buddhist works Asoka would be lauded to the skies almost as a second Buddha if the *Dhamma* to the inculcation of which he harnessed the entire resources at his command was not Buddhism. He

himself states that his zeal for *Dhamma* was the direct outcome of his association with the Sangha and the phenomenal increase in the popularity of Buddhism from the Maurya period also raises a presumption that the official propaganda of Asoke worked strongly in its favour Negatively, the far from solitary reference to his *Dhamamavijaya* in the Brahmanical *Gargi Sambita* shows that many Brahmanas did not receive the *Dhamma* as 'the essence of all religions' but as a particular religion towards, which they were not favourably inclined. The association of Buddhist symbols with the pillars and rocks on which the principles of the dhamma are engraved may also be cited as an evidence in support of their relation to Buddhism. As Dr. Mookerji says, the occurrence of the symbols probably suggests that Asoka was dedicating his 'petrified sermons to the Buddha.' The phraseology of the edicts is more Buddhistic than anything else. Senar has shown that many expressions are used in the inscriptions and the Dhammapada in similar contexts and Dr. Barua points out that almost all the terms occurring in SRE.I. are grouped together in the Dhammadayada Sutta (Majjhima, I) and the Purabheda Sutta as expounded in the Mahainddesa.

Though Asoka presented the *Dhamma* to the people as the 'essence of all religions', in one or two places the expression Dhamma seems to stand for Buddhism. In the Bhabru edict, the king refers to his faith in the Buddha, the Sangha and the *Dhamma*. In R.E. XIII, the impression produced by the Kalinga war is said to have resulted in his desire for *Dhamma*, i.e., Buddhism.

Inspite of its apparently non-sectarian nature, then, the *Dhamma* of the edicts is Buddhism and the vigorous activity of Asoka in furthering its cause was really a propaganda for Buddhism. There is, however, some difference of opinion even among those who support this view. Struck by its non-distinctive character and its almost exclusive emphasis on morality and the great resemblance it bears to the moral precepts of the Dhammapada, Senart infers that both (i.e., the *Dhamma* of the edicts and the Dhanmapada) represent a stage in the development of the Buddhist Doctrine earlier than the one reflected in the Pitakas, a stage when Buddhism was only a set of moral duties. In other words, the edicts embody the whole Buddhism of the time of Asoka, and that the distinctive doctrinal aspect of Buddha such as we find it in the Pitakas was yet

to develop. But as has been stated above it seems almost certain that a good part of the Pitaka literature, if not the whole of it, had been composed before Asoka. The conclusion is irresistible that the non-mention of the characteristic teachings of Buddhism in the edicts is deliberate on the part of Asoka. The reality of the matter is that it was not so much the philosophical aspect of Buddhism as the great emphasis it laid on morality, love and brotherhood that attracted Asoka. In that part of Buddhism, which was meant for lay people (*upasaka* and *upasika*) he found a system, which was hardly anything more than a set of moral and ethical duties calculated to promote just these above qualities without unduly emphasizing other world laners or indifference to material prosperity. He adopted it as his own personal religion and propagated it officially with a view to bringing about a moral revolution in the world. It is difficult to ignore the great similarly of the Dhamma of Asoka and the *upasakadharma* of the Buddhists as set forth in the *Sigalovada sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya* to which Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar draws our attention. The behest of Asoka's Dhamma may he accepted by the votaries of all, or almost all, religions but so far no non-Buddhist text has been pointed out which emphasises, collectively, just the same virtues as are numerated in the edicts and 'brings them to a focus, so to say.' There can hardly be any doubt that the *upasakadharma* of the Buddhists is the source of the Asokan *Dbamma*.

This explains why the *sumamum bonum* of that *Dhamma* is *Svarga* and not *Nivana*. As pointed out above, the usual reward offered by Buddhism to pious lay devotees was birth in one of the heavens or even as *Sakka*, the king of gods ; it was extremely rare that the possibility of *Nirvana* was envisaged for them.

The *upasakadharma* of the Buddhists had, properly speaking, only one formal feature—it required the devotees to proclaim their faith in the Buddha, the Sangha and the Dhamma. For the rest, it was hardly in any way distinguishable from the common morality implicit in all religions. It is, therefore, with perfect justification that Asoka could carry out his propaganda for it in the name of a 'general religion, forming the essence of all religions.' Measures for its promotion did not infringe his professed policy of religious

toleration and did not compromise his position as the Head of the State.

1. It is interesting to note that, in the opinion of Dr. Basham, the Ceylon chronicle—'.........tacitly admits that Tissa was loosely subordinate to Asoka.........'